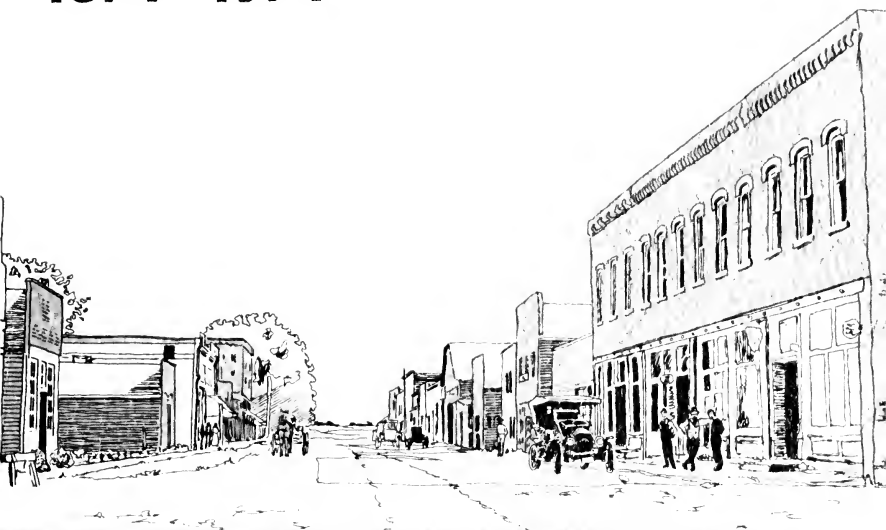




1874 1974



Emblem Design by Kevin Pikes

Cover Design by Leo Kruenegel

This book prepared and printed by United Graphics, Inc., Mattoon, Illinois

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STRASBURG IS . . .

church steeples, the new Community Building . . . leafy trees shading visiting neighbors . . . the old elevator rising above the town . . . summer flower beds, freshly trimmed green lawns.

STRASBURG IS . . .

productive farms run by men who love this land and know how to use it . . . their sons and daughters showing livestock in 4-H . . . humming grain dryers in the fall . . . hauling cattle to the sale barn . . . black and white Holestiens on pasture . . . loaded grain trucks lined up at the elevators . . . anhydrous wagons.

STRASBURG IS . . .

woods to walk in, mushroom hunting in the green spring or hickory nutting in the golden autumn . . . farm ponds for summertime fishing . . . nature trails at Hidden Springs, the Big Tree . . . pheasant hunting.

STRASBURG IS . . .

soup suppers, ice cream socials, Homecoming . . . stores, lumber yards, woodcrafting, the feed mill . . . basketball games, Little League games on summer evenings . . . Halloween trick and treating . . . Easter sunrise services, Mission Festivals, visiting shut-ins . . . yellow school buses . . . auctions . . . bicycling, gardening, playing cards . . . family reunions, the Alumni Banquet, covered dish dinners.

STRASBURG IS . . .

STRASBURG

LOCATED ON SEC 34 & 35 RICHLAND TWP & SEC. 3 PRAIRIE TWP

Scale 300 ft. = 1 inch



Strasburg - Original Town

How It All Began

Looking out over this area, we see houses and buildings; highways with cars, trucks, and school buses; green fields of wheat that turn yellow in the summer sun; or loads of corn and beans pouring out of a combine. It is hard to visualize how this country must have looked when it was unoccupied except for the many wild animals and an occasional band of Indians who called this their home.

It has been popularly accepted that there was a salt lick in what later became the center of town just south of the Nippe Tavern building. Great numbers of deer would travel long distances and gather here to partake of this mineral so necessary for their well-being. Now and then a hunter would venture into this area, and some might stay for the summer and return to their native habitat in Kentucky or beyond the Wabash. Throughout the country were a half dozen log cabins. Word spread of the prairie country abounding in wild life. Some began to stay and plant a few crops to add to their diet of game and fish.

The first reported settler in Richland was David Elliott, who came in 1825. His brother Jacob joined him, and later they set up a horse mill and a still house to avoid having to take their grain to Williamsburg to be ground. Wm. Weeger settled on Richland Creek in the spring of 1826, and his son John and family came with him. On July 4, 1826, John's wife had twin daughters. The neighboring Indians were fascinated with them, and made a double papoose cradle for them. This was kept in the family for years.

Two hardy pioneers were brothers, John and James Renshaw, who drove hogs from White County. They were so pleased with the country that they returned home, sold out their possessions, and moved, settling on Richland Creek in 1826. John stayed and farmed, but brother James moved on to Shelbyville and later to Decatur.

Soon the covered wagons of the Kentuckians, Virginians, and others cut trails over the unbroken prairies. The first house to be built on the ground now covered by Strasburg, was reportedly a one room home built a stone's throw from the deer lick. The house was abandoned, and the deer ventured back to their salt lick, but in time another and still another frontiersman occupied the shack.

Pioneers trekked westward, and with no roads to follow or obstructions to hinder them, they began to cut their own trails. One trail that was eventually cut began around Centralia and came northward through central Illinois. Strasburg is built on the road that was once this trail — the Grand Prairie Trail. It crosses most of the state from south to north just as the Old National Trail does from west to east. This trail became worn by the wheels of covered wagons. Many watered their oxen, horses, and cows in the Richland Creek tributary, which runs through the center of Strasburg. The watering hole was near where York's Garage building now stands.

A number of the covered wagons that took part in the overland trip to Oregon in 1847 passed through Strasburg to join with other wagons from

the Springfield area. Later, even as late as 1890, covered wagons would come along the trail, then a graded road, and stop not at the water hole, but the trough at one of the town's pumps.

The territory around Strasburg was such rich soil that the first efforts at actual farming were being made around 1840.

As the pioneersman moved out, the farmers bought their land at five to seven dollars an acre, for that which had been broken. Government land was bought for two dollars an acre. Later when all the government land had been sold, the Illinois Central put its land on the market for seven dollars per acre.

Some of the first settlers who arrived in the '50's were Brehmer, Bracken, Pikes, Ostermeier, Hamm, Kircher, and Harves. Many of these men were Germans from Madison County, having come originally from southern Germany. The town grew and more Germans came to settle, and eventually Strasburg became almost an entirely German community. In the 1860's and '70's Germans from Ohio came, and in the 1880's Pennsylvania Dutch came. A few of the later German families were the Altags, Bueskings, Vogels, Ulmers, Kulls, and Webers.

These German farmers were hardworking, intelligent, and frugal, and they soon made the prairie into fertile, productive farms. They were looking for new land and they found it here in abundance. However, most of the land they took to make their new homes on had to be wrested from the "wilder." North of the present town it was mostly wooded, and the trees had to be cleared and the stumps removed before the ground could be cultivated. To the south stretched large areas of prairie, with tall grass. Here in the bogs drainage was a problem, and diseases such as malaria and typhoid were prevalent. The prairie grass was well rooted, and the sod was tough and almost impenetrable. The only plows available had a metal point, but only a wooden mould board. "Breaking the prairie" was an arduous task. Many who settled here found it necessary to buy a tract of timber ground a few miles to the east or west to provide firewood, rails for fences, and building materials. These early farmers spent long hours cultivating hedge plants to make fences, but these were so tender at the beginning that they had to be protected from the animals that the fences were designed to keep in. The farmers were more than happy when barbed wire was made available, so they then could do away with rail or hedge fences.

So ends the story of our territory before Strasburg was. On to the town itself. It's recorded that Charles Ostermeier put up a store building where Renshaw's now stands. He opened a general store, and supplied the nucleus of the future town. In 1874 when the railroad was completed through Richland Township, Ostermeier laid out forty acres of land surrounding his store for the site of the town. He named it Strasburg, for his native Strasburg on the Rhine in Germany. The streets he named after those in St. Louis. From an early

plat book, we quote, "Strasburg has 150 souls, and was platted March 7, 1874, by Charles Ostermeier." The original plat of Strasburg was east of the "slab." The land west of the road was prairie and was farmed for a number of years.

The first money crop around Strasburg was wheat. At one time special trains were run to town during harvest. As time went on most of the marsh land was reclaimed and made tillable by tiling. Around Strasburg it's not uncommon to find a farm with as much as two or three miles of tile.

Ostermeier's store, and Strasburg itself, prospered.

The first building to be put up after Strasburg was laid out was Allen's Hotel, run by R. H. and A. F. Allen, and located where Max Weber now lives. Frank Beck was first postmaster. W. D. Fink was first blacksmith, and William Telgman moved his brick yard in from a few miles out of town and established himself as first in the brick making business. Other first businessmen were: druggist-J. H. Wiandt; general merchant-Martin Hamm, Storm, Henry Fester, Sr.; wagon shop-R. Rolbiger; sawmill-W. Bowen; grain dealer-J. D. Endicott; doctor-Dr. Amos York; shoemaker-Wm. Winkler; saloon-M. J. Laughlin; hotel and saloon-A. F. Van Rheeden.

The town of Strasburg was incorporated in 1882, and Beulah Gordon records that story: After the Lutheran Church was built at its present site about a quarter of a mile south of Strasburg, some citizens began to agitate for moving the business houses there. Lawrence Zerr, then postmaster, took his postoffice to that section, and a store, drug store, saloon, and grain buying office soon were established in "South Burg." This rival of the original town was just over the line in Prairie Township. Citizens of "North Burg" sensing the danger that threatened, decided to incorporate the town and exclude the upstart "South Burg" from its limits. Secret meetings were held in the garret over the blacksmith shop, and ways and means were plotted and discussed. Here it was brought to light that thirty votes were needed to carry the measure, and that "North Burg" had only twenty-eight citizens to support it, while "South Burg" had thirty citizens who would vote it down. After some thought, Ostermeier and his followers schemed a scheme, and cautiously set about to execute it. Three young fellows from the country were induced to bring their washings to "North Burg," spend their Sundays in that place, and thus establish a legal residence there. When the specified time had elapsed and the three were bona fide citizens of the village, and North Burgers demanded a vote on the matter of incorporation, and strange to say, triumphantly won the election by the majority of one ballot. (In the town board records of November 4, 1878, \$20.00 was paid to Mouser and Kelley "for their services in assisting to incorporate the village of Strasburg.")

Strasburg Businesses listed 1918 from Prairie Farmer's Directory of Shelby Co.

Beck, C.C. General Store
Beck, Earl Restaurant
Bernhard Milling Co.

Duling & Bauer Hardware
Engel, W. W. Hardware
Engel, J. L. & F. T. Hardware & Implements
Faster, Edw. H. Autos
Figge, Louis Harness
Green, O. A. Autos
Hasemeier, Henry Meats
Kircher, Chris General Store
More, The Lay, Co.
Nippe, Chas. Sawmill
Olinger & Bartlett Creamery
Pfeiffer, J. C. & Co. Lumber & Undertaker
Quicksall, J. A. Jewelry & Publisher
Rankin, Ed Garage
Seaman, J. H. Drugs
Seaman, S. E. Millinery
Spannagel, Wm. Blacksmith
Stierwalt & Backenstow Hardware
Storm, Mrs. Anna B. Millinery
Swinghart, W. E. Meats
Weber, J. E. & Co. General Store
Wiandt, J. H. Grocer
York, E. M. Clothing
Young, A. W. Hardware & Grain

Beulah Gordon again writes of Strasburg in the 1930's: Strasburg's population is 418. Businessmen of the town are: E. M. York, Clothing Store and Restaurant; G. C. York, General Garage; M. R. Storm, General Store; T. A. Weber and Sons, General Store; O. O. Kull, General Store; William Swigert, Garage; Gaylord Ulmer, Grocery; L. R. Hamm, Restaurant; J. A. Quicksall, Drugs and Jewelry; H. M. York, Barber; A. C. Duling, Blacksmith; Bryan Renshaw, Shoe Repairs; Alvin Kearney, Flour, Feed and Hardware; Louis Figge, Harness Shop; C. E. Bingaman, Cream Buyer; Martin Pfeiffer, Lumber and Undertaking; Paul Rincker, Buyer of Poultry, Eggs, and Cream; W. W. Engel, Hardware and Implements; C. C. Beck, General Store; F. F. Yakey, Elevator; F. H. Falk, Grain Buyer; Gilbert Ulmer, Hatchery; and John Biehler, Hatchery. The town has one newspaper. Physicians are Dr. Risser and Dr. F. W. Schroeder. Most of the businessmen have been in business in town for from twenty-five to sixty years.

The Strasburg Chamber of Commerce was active in promoting the growth of the town, and was a determining factor in bringing Route 16 through Richland township. It's recorded that their fight to accomplish this objective was carried to the Governor's office before it was finally won. Dr. Schroeder was president of this group for many years.

The Strasburg Homestead Association (Building and Loan Association) was organized in 1894 with Dr. Amos York as its first president and Alf Allen, secretary. Beulah Gordon writes in 1934 about this organization, saying it has a remarkable record. This association was responsible for building half of the town. During the first forty years of its existence, it had but one foreclosure. Officers in 1934 were G. C. York, president, and George E. Kull, secretary.

Board directors of this loan association have

included: Bill Telgman, Martin Hamm, Harry York, Joe Kull, Lauren Hamm, George E. Kull, Merle Buesking, G. C. York, O. O. Kull, Ruby Templeton, Roscoe Hash, and Bill Juhnke.

Directors remember transacting business in Martin Hamm's Office, and in later years, using the bank for meetings.

The loan association was liquidated on October 17, 1960. At this time O. O. Kull was president, and Ruby Templeton was the secretary.

Although some of the church fathers in the early days of Strasburg's history did not approve of insurance, especially life insurance, there have been

insurance agents in our community for years. The first agents in Strasburg were probably Martin Hamm and Henry Faster. Bob Faster also sold insurance after World War I. For thirty-one years, beginning in 1935, Max Weber was selling insurance in our community. Wm. Engel also handled insurance. George E. Kull sold insurance for more than twenty-five years until he went into the post office in 1934. Merle Buesking took over Mr. Kull's insurance business, and he handled the same companies until 1966. Rudolph Kull, insurance agent, mentioned these past salesmen in our community: Jim Kull, Reuben Spannagel, and Henry Buesking.

Silver Threads Among the Gold

AUGUST DOEDING

August Doeding was born January 24, 1889, the son of Fred Doeding, Sr. and Sophia Lading Doeding. Both parents came from Germany. He was born and reared on a farm west of St. Paul's Cemetery. He was one of a family of six children.

In 1918 August married Rose Doehring. They had two sons, Donald and Edwin. There are eight grandchildren.

August has farmed all his life. He and Rose began housekeeping on the farm Wilbur Cress now lives on. There Doedings remained until 1951 when they moved to their present home east of Strasburg.

August is remembered by many for his musical abilities. He's played in several area orchestras.



August Doeding



Mae Krile (1968)

MAE KRILE

Mae Krile was born on a farm near Hazelton, Gibson County, Indiana. She was one of Henry and Minerva Peterson Field's eleven children.

When Mae visited Illinois relatives, she met Charles Krile, and they were married in 1903. The Kriles raised four children: Elmer of Windsor, Fred of Windsor, Emma Schrimpf of Strasburg, and Gertrude Biehler of Shelbyville. Her family includes six grandchildren, fifteen great grandchildren, and three great great grandchildren.

In the Krile's early married life, they lived in Strasburg, and Charles Krile was in the hardware business with Ed Kircher. After he sold out to Kircher, they farmed until 1961. That year they moved to Shelbyville to retire. In 1962 Charles Krile passed away.

Mae enjoys attending Senior Citizens meetings at Strasburg where she spent the greater part of her life.



Ed and Odelia Buesking as they appeared in 1957.

BILL COLLINS

Bill Collins was born in 1889 of Mary Pikesh and Dan Collins. He has one brother, Virgil, and two sisters, Rosetta Fling and Stella Hellman. He has always lived near Strasburg, doing farmwork all of his life.

In 1947 Bill moved to his present home northwest of Strasburg.

He recalls farmwork of yesterday — shucking corn by hand and driving calves and hogs over open prairies.



Fred Popendieker in 1913.

ED AND ODELIA BUESKING

The Ed Bueskings have raised three children: Kenneth of Strasburg, Glen at home, and Rosadelle Nalefski of Decatur. There are four grandchildren and one great grandchild in the family.

Ed Buesking was born in 1889 on a farm at the southeast edge of Strasburg. He was the youngest son of Henry and Sophia Altag. In 1918, at the St. Paul's Parsonage, he married Odelia Rincker, daughter of C. Martin Rincker and Louisa Kull of Herborn. Odelia was born in 1889. She had two sisters.

Ed has farmed all his life. They lived on the Buesking homeplace; then in 1925 they moved to their present farm in Herborn.



Bill Collins (1971)

FRED POPENDIEKER

Fred Popendieker was born in 1889 in Strasburg where Ivan Keller's home is now. His parents were August and Minnie Doeding Popendieker. Fred has one brother and two sisters.

In 1934 he married Lillie Vogel, and the couple had three sons: Walter of Pittsburg, Penn., Harry in Mattoon, and August of Indianapolis. His wife passed away in 1964.

Fred Popendieker has been a carpenter all his life, most recently in the Mattoon area. His father, August Popendieker, was one of the early prominent carpenters of Strasburg. Fred presently divides his time between his Strasburg residence in the southeast part of town, and the home of son Harry in Mattoon.

MARTHA BAUER

Martha Bauer was born and raised in the Gustav Schroeder home in south Strasburg right "across from the parsonage." Her parents, both from Germany, moved to Strasburg from St. Louis in 1876. Gustav was the community shoemaker. Martha was born to a family of eleven, six boys and five girls. She remembers helping at home, also at her father's shoemaking and flour selling business uptown. Martha recalls babysitting for the Henry Fasters when she was only seven years old. Taking care of two children in those days made her one cent a day.

Martha attended St. Paul's school. At the age of twenty-one, she wed Andy Bauer. They farmed on the Bauer farm north of town and Martha remained there after her husband's death in 1957. She has two children, Arthur of Atlanta, Ga., and Eugene of Mattoon. Her family also includes four grandchildren and two great grandchildren.



Martha Bauer's wedding picture taken in December, 1909. Her dress, made by Nita Schroeder, was of fine material at 25¢ a yard.



Viola Ruff — taken in the 1930's.

VIOLA RUFF

Viola Ruff is the daughter of George and Sophia Beery Weber. She was born near Herborn in 1887, the youngest of a family of thirteen children.

Viola cared for her mother until her death, and in 1906, she married Dan Ruff, and they lived in Strasburg. They were the parents of three: Mabel Lading, Clarence, deceased, and Lucille Thomas. There are nine grandchildren, and twenty-five great grandchildren.

Viola has been an expert in handiwork. She has been an active church member all her life. She is the only surviving charter member of St. Paul's Ladies Aid. She belongs to Home Extension, and enjoys Senior Citizens meetings.

FRED AND NORA LENZ

Fred and Nora Lenz bought their first farm in 1927 south and east of Windsor, and they still reside there.

Fred Lenz was one of the twelve children of John Lenz and Caroline Tiemann Lenz. He was born in 1885 on the Lenz farm one mile east of town. He attended St. Paul's Church and was confirmed there in 1899. He married Nora McFadden in 1910 at the Grace Lutheran parsonage with Louis Lenz and Erma Newman serving as attendants. Miss McFadden was born in 1888 at Ashmore to Isaac McFadden and Aldaline Florence Moore McFadden. She had one brother and four sisters.

The Lenzs first lived on the Becker farm east of Strasburg. They raised five children: Yvonna Thomason, Glafa Ohm, Glenn, Roy, and Iola Bartimus. Two daughters died in 1929. Their family now includes eight grandchildren and three great grandchildren.



Fred and Nora Lenz on their 60th wedding anniversary in 1970.



Emilie Lenz

ETHEL DUNCAN

Ethel Duncan was born in 1881 in a log house south of Windsor, near the present Russell Carr home. She was one of five children of Berry and Mary Elizabeth Renner Barker, both of whom were raised near Strasburg. Before she was a year old, the family moved to the home where most of her childhood was spent — west and south of Richland Cemetery. She attended Whitlatch, Strasburg School, (while working in the Strasburg Hotel) and the Shelbyville School.

"Miss Barker" taught at Richland, Zalman, Sexton Corner, and in the Strasburg grades, for a total of nine years.

In 1910 she and Edward Duncan were married in Springfield. They had one daughter, Gretchen. After her husband passed away in 1957, Ethel remained on the Duncan Homestead until 1970 when she went to live with her daughter, Mrs. George Schumacker of near Shelbyville. Now she resides in the Nursing Care Area of the Shelby County Memorial Hospital.

Ethel Duncan was a charter member of the Shelby County Home Bureau. She enjoyed traveling and she even went to Hawaii during her eightieth year.

There are two granddaughters and a great grandson in the family.



Martin Buesking (1957)

EMILIE LENZ

Emilie Lenz was born in 1883, the daughter of Fred Doeding, Sr. and Sophia Lading Doeding. Both parents came from Germany. She was born and reared on a farm west of St. Paul's Cemetery.

As a young girl, she was one of the many Strasburg girls who did housework away from home.

In 1907, she married John Lenz who farmed, and there were two children: Orville of Strasburg, and Ruby Reel, deceased. The family includes two grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

The Lenzes observed their 61st wedding anniversary in 1967. In 1968 John Lenz passed away.



Ethel (Barker) Duncan, seated at right, as she appeared in 1907.

MARTIN BUESKING

Martin Buesking was born in 1886 on a farm at the southeast edge of town. His parents, Henry Buesking and Sophia Altag, had six boys and two girls. Martin helped farm at home, and later he farmed for Tobe Kull. He remembers that his pay amounted to \$15.00 per month for farm work. Martin has also been employed at the livery barn, done carpentering, and clerked for Chris Kircher. He farmed for August Doebling, on his own homestead, and north of town on the Spannagel land — for a total of thirty-four years. In 1957 he and his wife retired from farming and moved into Strasburg where he lost his wife, the former Bessie Spannagel, in 1964.

The Martin Bueskings raised eight children: Merle of Strasburg, Vera Doebling of Strasburg, Delores Van Scyoc of Mattoon, Harold of Mattoon, Lorene Mayhew of Florida, Mildred Rincker of Strasburg, Floyd of Texas, and Ralph of Strasburg. There are twenty grandchildren, thirty great grandchildren, and one great great grandchild.

MARTHA GREEN

Martha Green was born in 1889 on a farm west of town. She was the daughter of Tom and Emma Tendler Lading.

The Lading family lived at different places in our area, and in 1907 they moved to Fairfield where Martha met her future husband Oscar Green. Although the Greens moved to Oregon, and the Ladings returned to Strasburg, Martha and Oscar remained in contact and they were wed in 1911. They lived in Strasburg. In 1929 they built the brick home where Martha still lives.

O. A. Green passed away shortly before they would have observed their golden anniversary. There are one son Lowell, two granddaughters, and three great grandchildren.



Martha Green (1961)

SOPHIA LENZ

Sophia Lenz was born of Henry and Augusta Nippe Lenz near Strasburg on a farm in 1878. There were six children in the family. When her father died, Sophia and her mother remained on the farm until 1935 when they moved into Strasburg.

In her youth, Sophia worked away from home doing housework for others. Many in surrounding towns preferred Strasburg girls for house help. Sophia was an excellent seamstress, did beadwork, punch work, crocheting, embroidery, and quilting.

Sophia cared for her mother until her death in 1949 at the age of 93.

Presently Sophia is 95, and she resides at the Shelbyville Restorium.



Sophie Lenz as a young girl.

MARY ULMER

The daughter of Herman and Lena Mueller Doehring, Mary Ulmer was born in 1885.

As an eighteen year old bride of Martin Ulmer, Mary set up housekeeping on the Ulmer homestead. She has lived there ever since. The Ulmers had five children: Aurora Peyer of Kewanee, Floyd of Peoria, Ralph of Strasburg, Fawn Opal Benson of Joliet, and Maurice, deceased. There are thirteen grandchildren, and fourteen great grandchildren in the family. Mary is active in St. Paul's Lutheran Ladies' Aid, and belongs to Home Extension.



Mary Ulmer

IVA SUMMERS



Iva Summers

Born in Hebron, Nebraska, Iva Summers was the daughter of John and Melinda White Young. She is the only survivor of nine children.

Iva was wed in 1909 to David Allen Summers, and they began housekeeping in Nebraska. After a move to Indiana, in 1926 they settled in Paula, Ill. where Mr. Summers operated a grain elevator until 1960. He died in 1962.

Iva Summers had two daughters: Ruby Grider of Oklahoma, and Ruth Haskell, Strasburg. Since 1972 she has made her home near Strasburg with her daughter Ruth. She has four grandchildren, nine great grandchildren, and two great, great grandchildren.

She is active and enjoys attending Senior Citizens in Strasburg.

MINNIE KASANG

Minnie Kasang, youngest child of John and Henrietta Rosine Kasang, was born in 1883. She attended Prairie Hall English School, and confirmation classes at St. Paul's in Strasburg. Her mother was born in Germany. Her boat trip to America took three months.

Minnie's father was also born in Germany. He married Henrietta Rosine in Chicago and they settled in Shelby County, buying land from the Central Illinois Railroad. Their farm south of Strasburg is where their daughter Minnie still lives.



Minnie Kasang



Sophia Spannagel — taken in the 1940's.

SOPHIA SPANNAGEL

Sophia Spannagel's parents were Henry Duensing and Wilhelmina Friese. Sophia was born in Stewardson on December 26, 1877. There were two boys and two girls in the Duensing family. In 1901, Sophia married Reuben Spannagel, and most of their life they farmed.

They observed their 50th wedding anniversary together. Since her husband's death, Sophia has lived with her children.

Sophia's family consists of three children: Pearl Kull, Strasburg, Emma Jerusalem of Chicago, and Luella Hauer in Tennessee. There are two grandchildren, eleven great grandchildren, and two great, great grandchildren in the family.

HENRY AND ROSETTA KULL

Henry Kull, eldest child of James and Lucinda Weber Kull, was born in 1884 on a farm south of Strasburg. There were eleven children in the Kull family.

Rosetta Staehli Kull was born of Swiss parents in 1888 at Pioneer, Washington. There were five children in the Staehli family. They came to the Strasburg area in 1898.

Henry and Rose have three children, Ruby Hudson of Mesa, Arizona, and Carl and Merl who own a hardware store in Strasburg. There are seven grandchildren and eight great grandchildren.

Wedding day for the Kulls was February 16, 1908. They were wed at the home of her parents west of Strasburg. All thirty invited guests attended in spite of three degrees below zero temperature with ten inches of snow on top of two inches of mud.

The Henry Kulls lived on the James Kull farm for forty years. In 1949 they moved to Rose's home place, and here they still reside.

The family is noted for several things, among which are their musical abilities, Rose's excellent cooking, and Henry's checker playing



Rose and Henry Kull as they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 1958.



Lizzie Giertz (1960)

CHESTER LICHTENWALTER

C. A. Lichtenwalter and his wife, the former Erma Sands, have raised seven children: Fern Lankam of Indiana; Laurance, deceased; Inez Huff of Clinton; Kenneth in Dallas, Texas; Charles in Denver; Maxine Jenks of Indiana; and Norma Jean Outhouse in Mattoon. There are twenty grandchildren and twenty-one great grandchildren.

Chester was born in 1885 near Brownstown. His parents were John and America Pilcher Lichtenwalter.

When about nineteen years old, he went into the grocery store business with his brothers in Westervelt. Later he was owner. During the depression, the business failed, and Chester remembers burning bushels of accounts and notes that his customers couldn't pay. Chester has farmed and has operated several different businesses. He came to Strasburg in 1939, and purchased the farm south of town that the Lichtenwalters still live on. When he moved here, Chester brought with him four milk cows, thirty head of pigs, four old horses, and a "little" machinery.

LIZZIE GIERTZ

Lizzie Giertz was born in 1883 in Strasburg. Charles Ostermeier was her father, and her mother was an Altg. Lizzie's grandfather, Charles Ostermeier, plotted the town of Strasburg, having given the original forty acres to the town with one provision — that the village be named Strasburg after his own hometown of Strasburg, Germany. Lizzie had three brothers and one sister.

In 1907 Lizzie married William Burkhart, a Shelbyville farmer, but she was soon left a widow with two baby girls, Mary and Bernadine. Her second husband was Frank Giertz. To them were born Herman and Frank, both of whom now live in Arizona. Lizzie's family includes six grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

Lizzie lived in Strasburg most of her life, and helped countless families in the area with household chores. She now resides in the Lakeland Nursing home at Effingham.



Chester Lichtenwalter as a young man.

Addie Richards was the daughter of Ludlow A. and Sophronia Jane Skidmore Gaston. She was born in 1882 in Butler Co., Kansas. Her parents returned to Illinois when she was three years old and lived in the Mattoon and Windsor areas, and at one time in the Lincoln Cabin. She was one of a family of seven children.

In 1904 she married Joe Richards and since 1910 they lived near Whitlatch school, and that is her old home. Her husband was killed by lightning on May 20, 1925, while working in the field. For twenty-seven years she worked for the E. R. Cooks in Evanston. There are four children: Everett of Farmer City, Earl of Blue Island, Helen Grove of Shelbyville, and Laveta Helton of Effingham. There are sixteen grandchildren and twenty-one great grandchildren, and one great, great grandchild.

Addie recalls hearing how her father lit Aunt Sarah Bush Lincoln's pipe many times. Her grandfather was killed in the Civil War. Her father's two brothers are buried in Shiloh Cemetery.



Addie Richards

"Grow old along with me, The best is yet to be"



Town Board History and Records

It was recorded that the first town meeting was held in the Town Hall in Strasburg in 1873, however, earliest board minutes date from 1877.

On December 26, 1877, at a town election, the following village trustees were elected: Charles Ostermeier, Lawrence Zerr, J. J. Wilson, J. H. Wiandt, A. F. Van Rheeden, and A. F. Allen. A. F. Allen is on record later as president of the board. First meeting was held at the schoolhouse, and first business of this board included issuing liquor licenses for \$90.00 per year to Lawrence Zerr and A. F. Van Rheeden.

In 1878 the "calaboose" was built at a cost of \$29.39 with J. Wiandt in charge. In this same year, Strasburg had employed J. N. Storm as marshal, but he only lasted one day in his job. He was dismissed because he was found to be ineligible for the office. One project during this year was installing sidewalks, to be made of hickory, oak, and pine. Hitchracks were put up, and the village dug ditches on both sides of Main Street from the "public road" east to the railroad.

Roads were graded in October, 1883, and it was decided to plant one shade tree on each lot of the A. F. Van Rheeden addition. \$110.00 was allowed for the shade tree planting project. The ordinance relating to sidewalks was amended so as to read as follows: Sidewalks must be built of sound oak or pine lumber not less than one inch in thickness and sleepers to be two by four inches.

In February, 1886, six street lamps were purchased for \$34.75, and later in March, coal oil, wicks, and globes for the street lamps were bought.

Strasburg cared for the needy by authorizing one dollar to be paid for four meals for tramps. John Ebmeier was paid \$1.50 for one and one-half days labor on sidewalks.

A committee was appointed to see about drilling a public well in July, 1890. It was also agreed at this time that the cows of the village should be kept up at night.

In 1890 the town board paid \$28.00 for a coffin made by C. Beery for a charity case.

A petition signed by forty-nine citizens was presented in 1891 to appropriate \$1000.00 to School District No. 6 of Strasburg to help build a schoolhouse if the district would turn over old schoolhouse to village for a town hall. In this same year A. F. Van Rheeden was granted a pool hall license at \$12.00 per year per table.

In 1892 and 1893 Beery's plot of Strasburg was accepted, also Louisa Van Rheeden's plot and Clara A. Kircher's plot.

In 1900 it was decided to accept Lawrence Zerr's proposition to furnish bricks for sidewalks. Labor on the walks was fixed at twelve and one-half cents per hour, actual time put in, counting nine hours per day. The President of the Board appointed special police for July 4th. In this same year J. C. Klump was marshal at \$25.00 per month, and Bert Beck was appointed night watchman at \$5.00 monthly.

In 1906 a concrete walk was to be built on the west side of town property.

Shooting on the streets on New Years Eve and New Years Day was allowed in 1908.

In 1909 the charge for platform dances within the city limits was \$25.00 per day.

A motion was made in 1912 to provide a watering trough at the well at the corner of the Dannenberg Building.

A poll tax assessment for 1915 was fixed at \$1.50 each able bodied male over age of twenty-one years, and under age fifty. This tax could be worked out for seventeen and one-half cents an hour for labor on streets and thirty cents an hour for team labor.

Amusement places in town were closed indefinitely on account of smallpox in 1915.

In 1916 came the first motion to apply oil supplied by businessmen to the streets.

The bandstand was built in 1917.

In June 1923 there was \$68.75 paid to Prairie Electric Co. for lights.

Slot machines were declared a nuisance in 1927, and they were ordered taken out, as well as other games of chance.

George Gill was paid \$5.00 for plowing snow in March, 1939. In 1944, Wm. Faster received \$25.00 for working on the Honor Roll.

Alleys were to be sprayed, and the board declared a clean-up week in May, 1950. Taverns

were closed this year from 12 o'clock on Saturday night till 6 a.m. Monday. Donald Webner was appointed health officer for 1951.

In 1961 there was a discussion on city water and drilling test well. In 1970 a discussion was held on the city sewage system.

Strasburg's population in 1970 census was 456.

In 1971 the village gave a \$3000.00 check to the Strasburg Community Building.

Derry York requested annexation of his 80 acres into the village and the attorney drew up papers in 1972. In this same year "South Burg" was annexed.

* * * * *

These men have been Presidents of our village from the year 1877: A. F. Allen, Amos York, J. E. Endicott, A. F. Van Rheeden, W. D. Fink, J. F. Martin, J. N. Storm, J. F. Ulmer, J. C. Renner, Wm. Spannagel, A. Figenbaum, S. A. Storm, F. W. Risser, Henry Faster, Jr., John Bauer, Wm. Telgmann, C. C. Beck, Wm. W. Engel, August Metzler, A. W. Young, O. A. Green (for twenty years), Donald Webner (for sixteen years), H. A. Ulmer and C. E. Buesking.



Present village board: (back row) Gerald Sporleader, Paul Juhnke, Robert Falk, Elmer Staehli, Darrell Cress. (Front row) Gene Kull, C. E. Buesking, President, Floyd Weber.

Early Businesses

As the need arose for certain goods or services, some enterprising individuals would start a store or shop to meet the demand. Over the years, numerous businesses grew up or came into town, flourished for a while, and then passed into oblivion as owners moved away, died, or went out of business, or the demand for that particular product no longer existed.

There were several industries that contributed greatly to the life of the town before 1920.

Bernhard Milling Co. bought wheat, corn, oats, and other grains, and manufactured and sold soft and hard wheat flour, corn meal, and feed. It was located in the old "red" mill that is now painted aluminum colored.

* * * * *

In 1867 Wm. Telgman and his helper, Lawrence Zerr, came to Shelby Co. and started a brick yard and kiln. During the early years of the town, they moved their operation from the country to the tract of land now occupied by Webner Elevator, and there they made and sold brick to furnish the material for the construction of many of the local brick buildings in the downtown area.

* * * * *

A couple of millinery shops provided local ladies with the latest fashions in hats or other wearing apparel, and were a means of livelihood for the women who operated them. Some of the proprietors were S. E. Seaman and Mrs. Anna B. Storm.

* * * * *

Jewelry shops sold and repaired watches and many other fine pieces of jewelry. Patent medicines and home remedies could also be bought there. J. H. Seaman and J. A. Quicksall will be remembered as having jewelry stores.

* * * * *

A weekly newspaper was published to carry the accounts of births, deaths, marriages, and all the other goings-on, as well as providing a means for the merchants to advertise their wares. This paper was started by J. A. Quicksall in the building across the alley from the bank.

* * * * *

There were usually no less than three general stores in town that bought poultry, eggs, butter or cream, and sold almost everything. Most items arrived at the store in wooden barrels, and some families shopped only once or twice a year buying flour, sugar, or molasses by the barrel. Other items that were sold in the bulk from the merchant's barrel were cookies, crackers, and vinegar. These stores also offered carpets, coal oil, stove pipes and polish, clothing, boots and shoes, and anything that was needed for the house or family. Some of the early well-known general grocers were J. E. Weber & Co., Chas. Beck, and Chris Kircher. These merchants all operated huckster wagons in the outlying community.

* * * * *

In the center of town, the Livery Barn offered a young man a chance to rent a fancy buggy and horse to "spark" his favorite girl, or a "drummer" who arrived in town on the Wabash could get a rig for transportation to call on prospective customers in the countryside. Some school children from the country who attended school in town would leave their horses and buggies at the livery stable during the day, and thus rid themselves of the chore of unhitching and hitching up and feeding the animals at noon. It was built in the 1890's by J. N. Poe. The advent of the "horseless carriage" did away with the need for such services, and the building is now occupied by the Juhnke Feed Mill.

* * * * *

Just as tractors need a spring overhaul and periodic maintenance, so the equipment for farming with horses also had to be kept in good condition. A harness shop stood for many years at the east end of Commercial Street, where harnesses and saddles were repaired, dipped, and made ready for the spring farm work. Louis Figge operated and owned this shop for many years.

* * * * *

In the winter there was also a crop to be harvested. When the temperature dropped low enough to freeze ice to a depth of several inches, the ice was sawed into blocks, and hauled on sleds or wagons to the two ice houses. There it was packed in sawdust for insulation and stored away to be used the next summer. Ice was harvested from ponds in town and in the surrounding countryside. Two grocery stores, Kircher and Weber, had their own ice house in connection with their poultry houses. Poultry of all kinds was bought and here it was killed and dressed, packed in barrels with layers of ice to preserve it, hauled to the station, and shipped out on the train to the large cities. One of these combination poultry-ice houses was located in the building where Robert Falk has his repair shop, and the other stood south of the car wash. (In later years, Paul Rincker and son Roy had a poultry house located in the east block of Commercial Street, which was destroyed by fire a couple of years after it was bought by Wm. V. Juhnke & Sons.)

* * * * *

Another product that brought income to the farmers was hay. Since there were no bailers available on the farms, the hay was bought loose and was hauled in to town where it was stored in two hay barns that were built near the railroad. Here the hay was baled by a stationary bailer located in the barn, and was loaded into railroad cars and sold to out-of-town buyers. These barns both burned. One grain and hay dealer was A. W. Young.

* * * * *

There was once a thriving hotel business in town. It is reported that the first building erected

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Farmers bringing in loose hay to be baled at Joe Falk's hay barn.



Alvin Kearney, left, and Abe Young, right, at Young's Elevator situated on present ball park third base line. The railroad track is in the background.



Bernhard's mill and elevator as it was first constructed in 1883. This picture was taken by Dr. Risser.



Planing mill of John Ebmeier at east end of Commercial Street in 1910.



Richland Co-op Creamery Co's Plant. Manufacturers of Sweet Clover brand creamery butter, awarded first premium at Illinois State Fair in 1905. John Ruff, president Ed Klump, secretary and treasurer, and H. L. Moore, butter maker.

Strasburg House, hotel on Commercial Street, was located where the Beauty Box is now. Pictured are Mr. Starner, Ma Starner, Abe Young, Belle Young, Callie Young, Grace Young, and George Young



Mr. Kircher and Martin Hamm, early businessmen in Strasburg.



Original Weber Store Building. This structure was later moved to the site east of the old town house.



Interior of J. E. Weber's Store in the early 1900's. Mr. Weber is pictured second from the right. Albert Faster, on ladder, later was fatally burned in an explosion in the store.

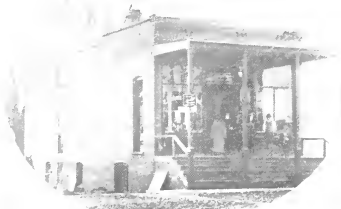
Abe Young and Alvin Kearney in Young's Coal and Grain at the east end of Commercial Street.



Bill Altag, George E. Kull, and Elmer York in York's Clothing and Shoe Store located above the present York's Cafe.



Exterior of York's Clothing Store. Gay York's Ford Agency was located in basement at this time.



E. M. York's Clothing Store.



Dannenberg Building, Nuff Ced Saloon, and building later used by Engels.



1898—Buying from Elmer York's huckster wagon, one mile south of Hazen's Corner at route 16. Pictured are Cassie Huffer, Francis Huffer, E. M. York, and Herrick Huffer.

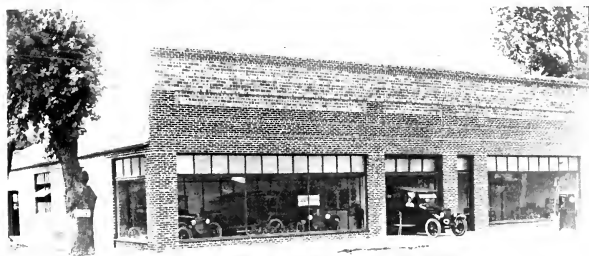
Kircher and Beck's Store, built from used materials from the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. Chris Kircher and Frank Beck are shown to the right.



Chris Kircher's Store in 1914. Pictured are Charlie Tendler and Martin Buesking.



Frank York, barber, and Rebe Hudson in Strasburg's Barber Shop.



Garage built by Sep Swigart and George E. Kull at the corner of Commercial Street and the main road, later to be route 32. Overland cars are shown.



Max Weber and Joe Schwarz atop a load of eggs, are headed for the refrigerated car on which the eggs will be shipped to New York or Boston. Old Renner is pulling the dray wagon.



M. G. Ulmer in 1923 with tank truck.

Commercial Street in the 1930's.



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after the town was established was Allen's Hotel, located where Max Weber's home now stands. Across the street from the livery stable, at the present site of the bank, a hotel provided a "home away from home" for visitors or weary travelers. Another well-known hotel, the Strasburg House, familiarly known as Ma "Steiners," was located about half a block east of there, next door to the present home of Lena Weber, and it, too, furnished food and lodging when it was needed. It is no wonder that these establishments always seemed to have plenty of business, as hotel bills then ran to \$1.00 a week.

Another such needed service was given by the dray wagon that carried freight and mail from the depot to the various stores or homes. Since all the merchandise came to town on the train, there was much demand for delivery wagons. C. E. Bingaman operated one of these for a long time.

Wagons and buggies were the only vehicles available at one time, and some of them were made in a shop that was built on stilts on the low area just west of the post office. Louis Tendler built and repaired wagons in this building. A red brick building standing off the street near here was the place where gasoline engines were made. Could be a little competition arising there!

Many farmers in the vicinity had a small field of cane, which was grown to provide molasses for table use in the home and for livestock feed. When the cane was mature, it was stripped of the leaves, headed, cut, and hauled to the sorghum mill in the north-east part of town, to be cooked down. At the peak of the season, the workers had to work long and hard hours, and it was reported that 2500

gallons of molasses were processed in one fall.

At one time a canning factory was built east of the mill, and for a short time canned such items as cereals, tomatoes, and other vegetables or fruits. The raw products were bought by contract from farmers, and processed here. A salesman also traveled to sell the products. There is in existence at least one can of oatmeal that was canned by this factory while it was in operation.

There was much wooded area around Strasburg, and also a need for lumber for putting up barns and cribs. A sawmill run by Chas. Nippe was located west of the home now owned and occupied by the David Durbin family. Here logs were sawed into boards and water tanks were also designed and made.

A planing mill once occupied the Hobson Garage and one was also in the building that had been used for the engine factory.

Before the Prohibition Era, the places where liquor was sold were known as saloons. These enjoyed a lively business and paid the village a substantial tax for the privilege. A. F. Van Rheeden was one of the well-known early saloon keepers.

One of the early creameries was located north of the Standard Oil tanks, and was operated by Olinger and Bartlett. They bought cream from farmers and made butter to be sold locally or shipped to city markets. Most of the farm wives kept their homes going on the butter and egg money, and sometimes had a little extra for savings. The building occupied by Burl Hobson was also used as a creamery.

Shindigs and Sociables

The younger generation asks now, "What did you do before television?" and "What did you do for fun?"

In the "good old days" the people of Strasburg were always busy, but they did find time for fun. One entertainment which attracted large audiences in town was the medicine show. A troupe toured the countryside in wagons, stopping for an evening or two in each small village. Sometime during the night's performance, the "Medicine show man" peddled his wares throughout the crowd. Usually a ten ounce bottle of this cure-all would cost one dollar. It was guaranteed to cure almost every ailment known to mankind . . . rheumatism, gout, corns, bunions, and woman's ailments. The high alcoholic content of the "medicine" may have contributed to its successes. In later years, medicine shows came to town by car, and they pitched their tent north of the present ball diamond. Oldsters recall boxes of



Mrs. Risser and daughters Nita and Etta, go for a sleigh ride. 1894—Dr. Risser's office is at right, and his family's living quarters are at left.

candy with a hidden valuable in one of the boxes. The customer who purchased the lucky box got the prize, but like most drawing contests, no one ever seemed to get the big prize.

Occasionally a small circus would come to town. A trained pony, a talented pig, or a trick dog would be the featured performer for an evening's performance.

First community homecomings were held on the Fourth of July, and these were big affairs. The balloon ascension was a major attraction. A pit was dug and a fire was built. The balloon material was placed over the pit, and hot gases filled it. Finally it was ready to ascend! The rider sat on a trapeze under the balloon, the ropes were cut, and up he went! After a short ride, the performer usually jumped via parachute just after releasing the air which allowed the balloon to descend to the ground. Once the parachutist landed on the top of what is now Renshaw's Store. This was quite a thrill because all feared the flying fellow would land on the hard roof. Traffic was stopped, all eyes looked upward, and everyone breathed a sigh of relief when the parachutist landed safely on the roof.

During the twenties as airplanes became more common, barnstorming planes would land in nearby fields and charge for riders in the new-fangled machine.

Many remember Frank Hoeser's act at a July Fourth celebration. He walked the high wire across Commercial Street. The wire was from an upper window in Weber's Store to a restaurant building across the way.

Strasburg had band concerts for years. Every

Thursday evening the band played at the round bandstand which stood west of the present Community Building.

Around 1917-1918 the Metzler brothers ran a movie house on the east side of Commercial Street. It was open three or four times a week. A long movie and a serial, perhaps one starring Pearl White, would be shown. A local girl would be at the piano, playing appropriate musical accompaniment for villains and heroes of the evening's show. With the advent of "talkies", the movie house discontinued business. Later local merchants donated money and free shows were presented on the streets to citizens. This entertainment was continued until the 1950's.

For the more educationally minded a chance to attend a chatauqua was offered. Plays and speakers were the main feature of this event. It was held in a tent on the site of the present ballpark. Lyceum courses were also presented in town. A two dollar season ticket would be good for several programs featuring famous performers.

Strasburg has always been a ball town. Even in the early 1900's the town boasted a traveling team which won many games. Emert Weber, Roscoe Renshaw, Fred Doebling, Martin Mueller, and Bert Wiandt were some of Strasburg's ballplayers. Rural as well as town diamonds were the scene of many Sunday games. There were no lights, so games were played during the heat of the day. Owners of the ball diamonds often set up lemonade stands at the scene, and made a little money on the side.

Strasburgians ice skated in the winter and roller

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A snowball fight in 1909 north of the public school building.



Strasburg Ball Team, back row: Edmond Diepholz, Fred Nippe, Fred Doeding, Theo. Von Behren. Middle row: Charlie Ostermeier, Arnold Diepholz, August Doeding, Martin Mueller. Bottom row: Roscoe Renshaw, Herman Diepholz.



1950 Girl's Softball Team sporting new uniforms. Back row: Manager Os Hood, Rose Von Behren, Neva Buesking, Alice Daniels, Retha Buesking, Grace Spannagel, Rosemary Schultz. Front row: Lill Wittenberg, Bertha Blythe, Emily Mulvaney, Jeanne Schultz, Lela Mulvaney, Nancy Boyer. Not pictured: Dorothy Reel, Doris Reel, and Marilyn Brehmer.

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skated in the summer. The Old Mill Pond was a favorite meeting place for ice skating. For several years, a roller rink run by Gay York was located just west of the present York's Cafe.

Other recreational activities in Strasburg's early history included a race track, pool rooms, and a bowling alley. The bowling alley, located in the J. J. Kull Building that Roger Rentfro owns now, was a thriving business during World War I. At one time the alley was in the upstairs of the building, and for some years it was in operation on the ground floor of the structure. Babe Storm is reported to be the first owner. Ben Kull also ran the bowling alley, and Dan Noffke was the last alley operator in town.

Early town records indicate that platform dances were held in town. Permits were issued, and platforms were built on which dancers danced

to the tunes of local fiddlers. In the surrounding territory, farmers held barn dances in their empty haylofts during the summer months. In later years, town halls, above where Rentfro's Recreation Center is now and Renshaw's Store stands, were used for dances.

Strasburg, like other communities, had Community Clubs which met in local schoolhouses. Some participants gave readings; others sang or played instruments, and the more ambitious presented three-act plays at these programs. Pie and box suppers were held also. The local swains bid against each other, and the highest bidder got to eat with the girl who had brought the box or pie.

Despite all the "fun", people of early Strasburg never forgot their churches, and it was a rare family who did not dress up on Sunday morning to attend local services or load up the wagon and surries to attend a nearby revival meeting.



Medical History

In 1974 the citizens of Strasburg must go elsewhere to seek the help of a doctor, but this has not always been the case. Births, toothaches, backaches, cases of grippe, appendicitis, bursitis, influenza, injuries, and childhood diseases — all were cases for the respected community doctor — the doctor who made house calls — the gentleman with the little black bag. This dedicated servant of people who gave our forefathers hope and relief in times of pain and sickness — this type of doctor is forever gone.

At least three doctors spent years in our village — namely, Dr. Amos York, Dr. Fred Risser, and Dr. Fred Schroeder.

Born and raised on a farm near Tuscola, Dr.



Dr. Amos York



Dr. York at his office which was located north of where Youngsraft Mfg. Co. is on Commercial Street. This picture was taken by Dr. Risser around 1900.

York came to Strasburg after a colleague of his who was about to set up practice in Shumway, highly recommended Strasburg as a place to hang out his shingle. Dr. York's friend wrote in June, 1875, "The country around Strasburg is rolling — good roads and plenty of them. There is a very heavy settlement — good houses — well improved farms and in small tracts. The town has four stores, one schoolhouse, no doctor, but has a large territory I think it a number one location for a fellow that wanted to get into a practice soon and think you could not do much better."

Dr. York took his friend's advice and came to Strasburg immediately, sending for his family later. He doctored here til 1909.

An excerpt from his diary indicates that he first stayed at Ma Starnes' Hotel, paying \$1.00 a week. On one occasion, when Ma Starnes was called as midwife and her husband was sick, she asked the doctor to stay with the sick man while she was away. He agreed to do so for the \$8.00 fee she was beating him out of. As it turned out, neither she nor the doctor collected any fee.

After his family arrived, Dr. York's office and home was just north of the brick building where the Dale Young Mfg. Co. is now located.

Dr. York has three grandchildren still in Strasburg: Mildred Hash, Dale York, and Aurora Buesking.



Dr. and Mrs. Fred Risser — 1918.

Dr. Fred W. Risser was born in Troy, Illinois, where his father was a merchant. At the age of 16 he passed the examination to teach school and taught for four years, all the while studying medicine during his vacations. In the fall of 1882 he entered Barnes Medical School in St. Louis, where he graduated in 1886. When looking for a suitable place to start practicing, he was charmed by the countryside in and around Strasburg, and so took up his residence here. His office was first built on a small corner plot in South Strasburg, just north of the St. Paul's teacherage and across the street from the old Ferdinand Kull Store. He married Mary Doehring, a local young lady, and then bought a large plot of ground farther uptown. The building was moved to this location and served as office and home for the family for ten years, until the familiar brick house, "The Risser Home", was built south of it in 1896. The frame building continued to serve as office and drug room for as long as he practiced medicine.

Dr. Risser was a scholarly man, interested in many other topics besides his medicine. During the fifty-one years he practiced in Strasburg, many changes took place and the good doctor was always "in on" things. Before phone service was installed in town, Dr. Risser helped put in a telegraph line from his own home to the Schroeder house in South Strasburg and they could communicate by Morse Code. The first telephone switchboard was operated by Dr. Risser's daughters, Etta and Rosa, in their home.

Dr. Risser kept colonies of bees, did crocheting and knitting, could sew a fine seam, and was a professional photographer. Many families still own their forefathers' studio portraits made by "Risser of Strasburg".

Members of the Risser family sometimes accompanied the doctor on his visits to patients throughout the countryside. At first Dr. Risser traveled in his horse drawn buggy; later he drove a touring car to the homes of the sick.

During the flu epidemic of 1917-1918, Drs. Risser, Schroeder, and Knowles made "rounds", and they would treat each other's patients if they happened to be in the neighborhood. The doctors were sorely overworked, and there were very few homes where someone was not suffering.

A special service at St. Paul's Church honored Dr. Risser on the occasion of the 50th anniversary in his medical profession. The following year his sudden death shocked the community.

Etta and Rosa, daughters of Dr. F. Risser, prepared their family home and opened it to those who needed love and care. Their first patient came in 1938. Working with Dr. Schroeder and neighboring doctors, they cared for bed-patients. Babies were born in the Risser Home, and minor surgery was performed there over a period of thirty years.



Dr. and Mrs. Fred Schroeder. Dr. Schroeder was Strasburg's last doctor.

Dr. Fred Schroeder, a native of Strasburg, was born in 1883, and he lived most of his life in the family home in South Strasburg. He attended the theological seminary in Springfield, but he always had a desire to be a doctor. He realized his boyhood ambition when he graduated from Barnes Medical School in St. Louis. In 1911 he married Dr. Risser's daughter Nita, and set up practice in Sigel. After about a year they moved back to Strasburg, where he built an office on the corner of Main and Commercial Streets. This building is still standing, but it was moved east when the filling station was erected. Many patients were cared for here, and much medicine was dispensed, and the doctors of this time mixed many of their remedies from powders and liquids and they always had quite an assortment of pills on hand.

Dr. Schroeder was also a surgeon, and he performed surgery in his office and in the Risser Home, as well as in area hospitals.

Woodworking was Dr. Schroeder's hobby. He worked at home refinishing furniture and making cabinets and chests for himself and his

family.

Dr. Schroeder was known in the village as quite a talker and many ex-patients can relate tales that were told by the good doctor. One of his stories is of a local lady who called for his services. When he asked where she lived, she replied, "On this side of the railroad track." We don't know if the doctor found her residence or not by that description.

Dr. Schroeder continued to serve the sick of the community until his own health failed. In 1966, at age 83, he passed away in the home of his daughter Ruth.

Dr. D. L. Robey, physician and surgeon from Virginia, is listed as Strasburg's first doctor, but no records can be found of his service here. He had moved elsewhere by 1875.

Other doctors, some dentists, and chiropractors were in Strasburg for relatively short periods of time. Drs. Stephens, Brunk, Knowles, Chase, Adams, Burlington, and Eli York all served the distressed of the community.



Post Office History

The Strasburg Post Office was established on February 11, 1874, under the name of Strasburgh, but the name was changed to its present spelling on July 13, 1893.

The office of postmaster was held by several citizens in Strasburg's early history. Some were in office for only a few months, and one, for instance, held the position for two weeks. During the first ten years of the town's existence there were eleven appointments. The first postmaster on record was Frank M. Beck.

When Lawrence Zerr took time out from his brickmaking to take the position of postmaster in 1875, he moved the post office to the south edge of town, known as "South Burg," where several businesses soon sprang up. The early location of the post office that most oldsters recall was in the south-east corner of the Weber Store Building. When this frame building was replaced by the present brick structure on that site, the post office was moved to a location across the street near the east end of the block. Later, it was moved to the present location.

Since the early postmasters held their offices by political appointment, their jobs were subject to the outcome of the national elections. As the occupant in the White House changed, so did the postmaster. The Faster family holds the record for having served in this office for the greatest number of years. Henry Faster, Sr. was appointed in 1883 and held the office until Grover Cleveland was elected, and a Democrat took over. In 1889 he again received the appointment and served while Benjamin Harrison was President. Cleveland was again elected and Faster was out for four years, but

was in again and served until his death in 1910. His son, William Faster, was appointed at this time, and he held the office until 1934 when Franklin D. Roosevelt was President. Etta Risser helped in the post office for many years. At this time George E. Kull was appointed, and he served until his retirement in 1957. His wife Aurora assisted in the office. During Mr. Kull's years in the post office, Strasburg's office attained a third class status, due in part to the large shipments of baby chicks from the hatcheries. Sales of War Bonds also hit a record, equalling that of Shelbyville. At his retirement, the present postmaster, Lowell T. Green, was given charge in 1957, and was appointed in 1959. Elsie Nippe served as clerk for many years under both George E. Kull and Lowell Green, until she retired. Maurine Hobson worked there in later years, and at present Audrey Falk has that position.

The mail arrived twice daily on the train as long as the Wabash was in service. When it was discontinued, the mail was brought into town by truck. Homer Iler performed this service for many years. At one time, there was also the Highway Postoffice, a van which traveled from Vincennes, Indiana to Springfield, Illinois. It came through Strasburg for a few years. It carried two postal clerks who picked up, sorted, and delivered mail along the route.

The Strasburg Post Office gained nation-wide attention when a gang of gunmen came into town early one morning, before daybreak, in 1930. One of the men, Cecil Wright, a parolee from a state prison, was convicted of breaking into the Strasburg Post Office and stealing a small amount of

change (forty-three cents) from the rural carrier's desk. For this theft of government property, Wright served a lengthy sentence in Alcatraz. He studied the rudiments of law while in prison and, pleading his own case on the basis of "habeas corpus", had himself released in 1943 for a new trial.

In 1903 the Rural Free Delivery began to bring the mail to farm homes and established a new way of life for country dwellers. Instead of having to make a trip to town once to twice a week to pick up the mail, a rural carrier now covered a specified route every day to deliver and pick up the mail at each mailbox which was generally located right at the front gate.

At first there were three rural routes serving the Strasburg area. Route No. 1 was covered by Chas. Renshaw, who went mostly into Richland Township. Dan Ruff was given Route No. 2, going south and east of town. He carried the mail for thirty years, retiring in 1933. John Ruff had been appointed to carry mail on Route No. 3, known as the Rockford Route but he died before starting work. Joe Kull carried this route for a while, as did

Warren Storm, but it was later discontinued, and the territory was given to the two remaining carriers, Mr. Ruff and Mr. Renshaw.

Country roads were not very dependable when winter snows and spring rains made them almost impassable, and automobiles were not available in the early 1900's, so the horse and buggy had to be used by the carriers. At times the conditions were so bad that the mail had to be delivered by horseback or on foot. Substitute carriers helped out during these times, and in cases of sickness or when the carrier was on vacation. Some of the substitute carriers were Charles Ruff, Bill Renshaw, who later became a regular carrier, John Whitacre, Glen Renshaw, and Otto Wirth. Mr. Wirth carried mail as substitute for thirty-three years, from 1927 until 1960. After Dan Ruff retired, the two routes were made into a single one, and Roscoe Renshaw carried this for many years until he retired. The present rural mail carrier is Chas. Jr. Rosine, and his substitute is Clinton Weber. With the country roads being greatly improved, the carrier now covers a daily route of about sixty-six miles with 168 boxes.



The Presses Roll

In 1889 J. A. Quicksall issued the first copy of the *Strasburg Herald*. From a small print shop with a hand press, he edited 50 copies at first. Soon more than 200 copies were being printed weekly. Editor Quicksall soon had the largest subscription list for a weekly paper in Shelby County. Merchants and businessmen for twenty miles around advertised in the thriving *Strasburg Herald*. With the work piling up, Quicksall enlisted the help of his wife; and he eventually employed William Hellman, then a boy, to do the mass of work that came to the office. Later, a cylinder press and a gasoline engine speeded up the work.

William Hellman was called to the colors in World War I, and other help was found in 1917. When Hellman came back from the war, he purchased the *Herald* and operated the printing shop successfully for many years. Ill health forced him to sell. In 1930 the *Herald* sold to J. Edwin Hoyer of the *Stewardson Clipper*. Ownership of the paper passed through many hands until Frank Trainer took over the *Herald* in December of 1932. Later Trainer, due to his wife's illness and also to his advancing age, sold the entire shop to Leon Murray of Pana in December, 1936. For three years Murray printed the *Herald*. The subscription rate during this period was \$1.25 per year. In 1942 rates were raised to \$1.50 yearly.

P. G. Kaase was next editor, until 1943 when George Dunscomb of Windsor purchased the paper, and it was printed under the editorship of Theodore McDonald. The last issue of the *Herald* was printed December 29, 1943.

A few items of interest from the *Strasburg Herald*:

May 16, 1916—from J. H. Wiandt's ad:

coffee—2 lbs. for 25¢
vinegar—gallon for 15¢
mustard, in pint milk bottles—8¢
Pork and beans—4¢ and 8¢
7 lb. box crackers—54¢
cookies, per lb.—12¢

May 6, 1920—

A new boiler has been installed in the engine room of the Strasburg Creamery this week.

From an ad: G. M. York has extra pair pant suits for \$45.00

Wm. W. Engel tells us that he received a carload of Samson tractors today and can make immediate delivery.

August 18, 1921—from a column titled "Motor Circles":

York and Green have recently sold a new Ford touring car to Jack Griffin, the Big Four section foreman at Windsor, and another to Edgar A. Mitchell of near Gays.

Henry Faster, Jr. cashier of the Strasburg State Bank, drives a new Haynes touring car having traded his Chandler in on the new car at Decatur Sunday.

May 18, 1922—from a Bernhard Milling Co. ad:

New flour prices:
Diamond 48 - \$1.85
Perfection 49 - \$1.80
Fine chick feed 100 - \$1.90

Wm. Pikesh shipped six carloads of corn fed

steers to the Chicago Market Tuesday. Mr. Pikesh and Chris Lading accompanied the shipment. It was one of the finest shipments ever sent to market from our city.

June 1, 1922—

Memorial Day services were held at Grace and St. Paul's Cemeteries. The Strasburg Band made their first appearance in their new uniforms.

H. J. Allen set up his merry-go-round in town. Everyone is invited to join in the hobo masquerade.

1934—

At a public sale of Mrs. Firebaugh of Windsor, Pete Buesking, auctioneer, sold a mare for \$90.00. The animal is about 20 years old, and Pete said he sold the same mare 10 years ago for \$90.00. Age has made no perceptible change in the value of this animal, and considering the age, she was well sold.

Wanted: Milk customers, 5¢ a quart.
Wm. Mueller, Jr.

The *Herald* is the only 8 page paper in Shelby County for \$1.00 a year.

Recently a businessman from Mattoon visited Strasburg, and after driving over the town, said, "Strasburg has the best kept residence of any town I've ever seen. The houses are painted, the lawns are kept neat, and the streets are in fine shape."

Number, Please - The Telephone Story

Prior to the 1900's, there was no telephone system in Strasburg, but three ingenious citizens had a special way of communicating with each other — they had a telegraph line. Dr. Risser, G. Schroeder, and Henry Fester, Sr. had rigged up a telegraph line between their homes, and they had a code worked out which they used.

Other people in town needed to talk with each other and in 1900 Dr. Risser organized the first telephone system for Strasburg and surrounding areas. One party line, number 41, consisting of sixteen phones was installed from the Risser home south and east into the country. Dr. Risser was owner of the first phone, and he originated the calls consisting of short and long rings. The sixteen on this first line were: Wm. Schroeder, George Blythe, Henry Diepholz, Jr., H. C. Doehring, Adolph Kirn, Wm. Von Behren, Fred Doehring, August Doehring, Louis Mueller, Henry Wirth, Henry Buesking, Sr., Henry Diepholz, Sr., E. Johnson, Cliff Brackin, and Dr. Risser.

More citizens got telephones and more lines were built. Some private lines were installed.

Early telephones used wet batteries. They hung on the wall and the user turned a crank to reach central.

Dr. York helped Dr. Risser in maintaining the telephone system. The first switchboard was in Dr. Risser's home. Later the switchboard was set up in the Jasper Curry home on the corner where

This is something to be proud of since it comes from a stranger.

The Wabash ran an extra Tuesday from Stewardson to deliver 9 cars of hogs for Floyd Yakey.

Tonight Strasburg will have the privilege of seeing a free talkie-movie show at the Storm Hall. It is free for everybody and will consist of over a mile of fine film.

April 10, 1936—

The Biehler Hatchery is turning out chicks at the rate of 28,000 weekly with two large incubators.

July 21, 1938—

G. C. York advertised: Stanolind gas—15¢/gal. —tax paid.

March 9, 1939—

Strasburg well strikes pool of oil 4 miles south of Strasburg along the Wabash right of way.

1941—

Pancake and Sausage Supper 30¢—adults, 15¢ —children. Serving starts at 6 p.m. at Duling High School Gym by Richland Home Bureau. February 4, 1941.

May 7, 1942—

A column titled, "With Our Boys in Camp", gives addresses of 27 Strasburg service men.

O. O. Kull's home now stands. Lily Davidson ran the switchboard, and Ed Wingate had a store in the building. Here the switchboard remained until it was moved to a building on the southeast corner of T. A. Weber's lot, where it stood until 1924. The central office was then moved east across the alley where it was used until 1964 when the new dial system went into use.

In 1906 the local phone company was incorporated and became known as the Strasburg Mutual Telephone Company. Capitol stock was \$10,000. First directors were: Michael Weber, John Ruff, Henry Spannagel, Ed Klump, John Jackson, J. F. Kull, Dr. Risser, Dr. York, and H. Nehring.

No. 1 share was issued to J. F. Kull in 1906. President was J. F. Kull and Wm. Engel was secretary. Cost was \$20.00 a share.

Twenty-five telephone lines were extended throughout the community in following years. From three to seventeen phones were on each line. Each party line had its own officers; a president, secretary, treasurer, three directors, and a lineman; and was responsible for its own upkeep. Dues ranged from \$2.00 to \$15.00 throughout the years.

Phone service for Strasburg began at 5 a.m. and ended at 9 p.m. except for emergency.

If a phone user needed to know about a fire, for whom the bell tolled, the time of the day, a message left by someone who had tried to call, or

any special announcements, central was called. Only in rare cases did central not have the answers needed. Area citizens still miss this "personal help" that the modern dial phone system just can't provide.

Early managers and operators include Fred Lading, Ray Wiandt, Mary Green, Alice Eakin, Peggy Eakin, Carrie Bodine, Tillie Thies, Freida Harmon, Ruth Tate, Frank Giertz, Mamie Hirtzel, and Maurine Hobson. Fred Andes, Walt Andes, and Ida Ruwe worked for many years in the telephone office.

Times changed, and so did the telephone system of Strasburg. In 1960 negotiations were begun to sell to the Illinois Consolidated Telephone Company. After many meetings, this was accom-

plished. A new telephone office was built on east Main Street where the Charles Beck store was once located. On December 16, 1964, at 9:01 a.m. telephone service was cut over to dial operation. Strasburg users had free service to Windsor and Stewardson and they could call Shelbyville by dialing "7". Later free service was extended to these Shelbyville calls. In 1969 users could direct dial all long distance calls.

As of 1964 there were 471 stocks in force in the Mutual Telephone Company. Phones in use for all or part of the year numbered 360.

In 1966 the Strasburg Mutual Telephone Company was dissolved by the shareholders. So ended the community phone system which had served Strasburg since 1900.



Strasburg Bank History

In the early years of Strasburg's history, local citizens drove to Shelbyville over muddy roads, then called Fraker Flats, if they wanted to do banking.

Among the first businessmen unhappy about the situation was Martin Hamm who complained to Judge Thornton that it was hard to make the twelve mile trip when necessary. The judge suggested that Strasburg organize their own bank. With the help of some Shelbyville citizens, they did in the year of 1902. First officers were: W. E. Walker, president, T. R. Dove, vice-president, and Henry Faster, cashier (who up to this time was depot agent.)

A few years later, some Shelbyville businessmen tried to charter another bank in Strasburg, but the plan was dropped.

In 1932 during the depression many banks were forced to close, but due to the efforts of the directors, Strasburg Bank remained open and in business. The community has always been proud of this.

Only once was the bank threatened with robbery. About the year 1910, someone tried to blow the vault open with nitroglycerin. For some reason they failed. Ben Bingaman, the night-watchman, heard nothing. Later it was learned that a hand-car was gone from the local depot which had been broken into. The hand-car was later found at Windsor. Theory was that the would-be robbers took the hand-car to Windsor, then hopped a big four freight train.

Strasburg's first bank was located in the building which was torn down where the Community Building now stands. The building was then shared with J. A. Quicksall, jeweler and

druggist. Later in 1915, a hotel was razed and the present bank building was constructed. In 1917 it became The Strasburg State Bank, having a federal guarantee for savings.

The new bank was first heated by a hand-fired coal stove which was just east of the vault. Later a coal furnace was bought for the basement; then this was converted to oil and finally, to city gas. Original radiators are still in use.

The original wall clock still is in use in the bank. Many remember the stuffed loon bird that used to sit "eyeing" bank customers. Edwin H. Faster had shot the bird at Henne's Pond, and the stuffed loon sat on top of the bank vault for years until recently.

In 1968 William B. Cannon of Decatur bought controlling interest in the bank, and in 1969 a complete remodeling job was done.

The following are previous bank presidents: James F. Kull, 1917-1940; J. E. Weber, 1940-1962; and Max Weber, 1963-1968. Henry Faster was bank cashier for twenty-six years, from 1917-1943. Ruby Templeton and Joe Kull have also been cashiers. Former employees include: Edwin Faster, Eva Falk, Geneva Kull, Frieda Hughes, Paul Manhart, and Sandra Rincker.

Some past bank directors are: Martin Hamm, Lauren Hamm, G. B. Ulmer, G. C. York, Ruby Templeton, James Kull, Henry Kull, Alvin Kearney, J. E. Weber, Max Weber, and Joe Kull. Present directors are Wm. Cannon, Harry Cannon, Arthur Stiedley, Lowell Green, Floyd Weber, and Roy Rincker.

Serving the community at the Strasburg Bank now are: Roy Rincker, Nita Vogel, Linda Cress, and Evelyn Augenstine.



Funeral Customs

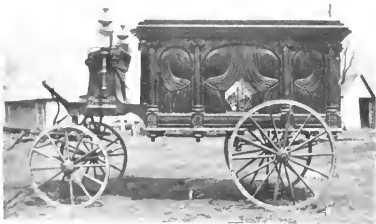
Long ago when death entered a home, friends relatives, and neighbors came to be of assistance. Someone would "lay" out the body in preparation for burial. This was done at the home since it is doubtful that there was an undertaker here 100 years ago. The clock in the home would be stopped at the hour of death and started again after the funeral. The church bell would ring and toll the number of years of the deceased's life. Ladies would get dark clothes ready for the mourning family to wear at the funeral. A black crepe band was placed around men's hats or worn on one arm, and black veils were worn by the ladies of the family.

Some remember Chris Beery who made caskets. His farm home was directly north-west of Strasburg on the west side of the highway. Caskets were made according to the size of the person, and were smaller at one end. Beery may have assisted with burials before the community had an undertaker.

Since the bodies were kept at home until the funeral, there was a "wake" overnight by family and friends. The rooms were kept as cool as possible since there was no embalming done, and no screens for windows. Food brought in by others was served at the wake. This was a quiet time with the entire household "hushed".

A black crepe wreath was placed at the door where death had entered. In later years, artificial flowers were used at the door, and this custom is still observed if the body is brought home for visitation.

Caskets were taken by horsedrawn wagon or spring wagon for services and burial. Then came the black hearse drawn by two black horses with plumes or some ornament on their bridles. If roads were too bad, an extra team of horses was added.



First horse-drawn hearse used by John Pfeiffer, Sr.

On the burial day there would be a short service in the home, a slow moving procession to the church, and a church service with hymns and sermon. Sometimes the entire funeral was in the home. As the funeral procession moved along the roads, all vehicles they met stopped and the men

would remove their hats, waiting until the procession passed by. The driver of the horse-drawn hearse remained on the hearse during the service, regardless of weather. The hearse was kept covered in the livery barn. The team of black horses were stabled there also.

Funerals were largely attended, especially the church services. Extra chairs were placed, and even then people had to stand. If a businessman died, other places of business closed during services.

At the cemetery there was a rough box, made of wood, in which the casket was placed. Boards were laid across the top of the rough box. Relatives and friends assembled at the cemetery for a prayer and hymn. As the pastor said the words, "Earth to earth, dust to dust, ashes to ashes", three handfuls of dirt would be thrown on the rough box. In later years, flower petals were used. Burial depth used to be six feet, now it's about four feet.

Taking part in the funerals would be the flower girls, and the black gloved pall bearers.

After leaving the cemetery, relatives would go to the home of the deceased to visit with family members from a distance.

It's doubtful that many flowers were used at funerals 100 years ago, especially in winter. Wild flowers or garden flowers in season were used, and some remember artificial flowers being used. In recent years greenhouse flowers are used so lavishly that families sometimes request memorials instead.

The first undertaker to be remembered is John C. Pfeiffer, Sr. Later his son Martin took an embalming course and he was in partnership with his father until his father died in 1930.



John Pfeiffer, Sr., Strasburg Undertaker — 1915.

In 1936 Martin Pfeiffer built a brick home in the south-western part of town. This was Strasburg's first funeral home. Now the bodies were brought here for embalming. Later families held

visitations here before the church service.

When Martin Pfeiffer retired in 1958, George Moeller of Springfield took over the funeral business. He purchased the two story house southeast of Grace Church, and this became Strasburg's Funeral Home.

In 1962 Moeller moved to St. Elmo to be undertaker there, and he was succeeded here by Kessler-Howe, funeral directors of Shelbyville. Roy

Rinker purchased the funeral home and this house is presently used for visitations and funerals.

James Yockey purchased the Kessler share of the business in 1970, and it became Howe-Yockey Funeral Directors. Monte Howe died in 1970, but his widow remains in the business, and the Strasburg area continues to be served by Howe and Yockey Funeral Directors.



And Here They Lie

As the early settlers of the territory in and around Strasburg organized churches, began schools, and opened businesses; so did they, of necessity, plot cemeteries.

Wade Cemetery, a tiny corner of land two miles north, and two and one-half miles west of Strasburg, is on ground now owned by Ralph Reel. Five stones are still here; three of which are Revolutionary War soldiers. The oldest stone marks the 1830 gravesite of John Jenkins, Pvt. of Light Dragoons of Virginia. This is probably Shelby County's smallest cemetery.

North of Strasburg and east of Elmer Richard's house is Lookout Cemetery. There are nearly forty stones remaining here on a knoll under three oak trees. Most stones date 1830's through the 1850's. Family names appearing on stones include Webb, Young, Poe, Parks, and Crockett. Several veterans are buried here, among them Abner Poe, a Black Hawk War veteran.

The Rockford Cemetery, known formerly as the Welton Cemetery, is one mile south and four miles west of Strasburg on the farm of Conn Fox. The oldest stone here is probably that of Jesse Welton who died in 1842. This cemetery is still being used.

Two miles north of Strasburg and three-fourths mile west is the Richland Cemetery. The oldest tombstone here is dated October, 1819. Two veterans of the War of 1812 are buried here; and twenty-one Civil War veterans' graves can be found. Area families still bury at Richland.

Once called the Keller Cemetery, Lower Ash Grove Cemetery is next to the Lower Ash Grove Church about three miles east of Strasburg. This land was originally Illinois Central land. Later the Lenzes sold the plot to John Blythe to be used for burial grounds. The oldest part of the cemetery is next to the church with the date 1838 on one stone, that of Joseph Noland.

Gaskill Cemetery is at the Gaskill Church or

"Brick Church" site east of Strasburg. Both church and cemetery date to 1869 and are still being used. The moss-covered brick tomb here is the resting place for Allen Gaskill and his family.

The first St. Paul's Cemetery was on a small plot one and one-fourth miles south of Strasburg. It is thought that six graves of the early 1860's are here, although the tombstones have all disappeared. The church's burial grounds were moved to a four acre hillside south and west of town. First graves here were arranged in rows in the order of death; after 1913 lots were laid out and now families are buried together. A message to passers-by on one stone reads:

"Dear Friends, as you go by,
As you are now so once was I.
As I am now, so you'll be.
Prepare for death and follow me."

On some of the earlier stones there are Bible verses written in German.

Grace Cemetery is at the west edge of Strasburg on the Fred Hasemeier ground. Stones here date from 1897. In the center circle are buried two pastors: Rev. A. T. Bonnet who died in 1917, and Rev. G. A. Schimmel who died in 1937. The stone of Dr. Amos York, Strasburg's first doctor, is found in the north-east part of this cemetery.

In recent years, Memorial Day services have been observed at Grace Cemetery with the high school band marching and the American Legion conducting the programs.

Two other cemeteries area people visit are the Swede Lutheran Cemetery two miles south and nearly four miles east of Strasburg, and the Spain Cemetery south of Kingman on the Art Boldt farm now owned by Elmer Tabbart. Both are still in use.

Hundreds of persons from the earliest settlers to our contemporaries lie near us in quiet repose, and the history of Strasburg marches on.



The Wabash Railroad

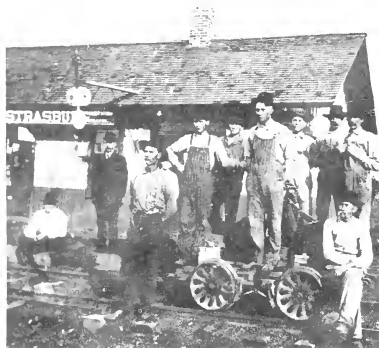
Until a town could boast of a railroad, there was little chance of its prospering. The future Strasburg was an isolated rural community in the 1870's. Wagons hauled goods to the "Country Store" operated by Charles Ostermeier. About

every two months the wagoners loaded up supplies at the Windsor Depot and brought back calico, dishes, boots, and whiskey which had been "rail-

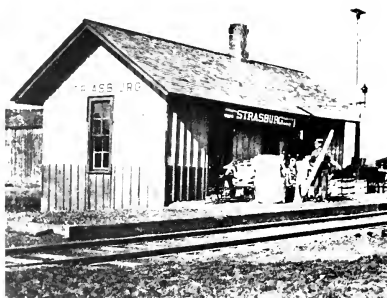
(continued on page 33)



Wabash Depot and A. W. Young's Grain Elevator. Depot stood where current park rest-rooms are.



I been workin' on the railroad.



Strasburg Depot.



Unloading sacks of flour at Strasburg.

(continued from page 31)

roaded in" from St. Louis. Although Windsor was only seven miles "as the crow flies," the trip was often a two-day affair. Therefore, the residents of the proposed Strasburg were indeed happy when they heard that the Chicago and Paducah railroad were "comin' to town". Immediately plans were made to plat a village of forty acres of land surrounding Ostermeier's Store. The town dreamers were doomed to disappointment, however. The C & P Railroad failed during the Panic of the 70's.

The railroad that was destined to serve Strasburg was built around 1874 and was constructed as a junction line from Decatur, Illinois. It was called the Wabash. The freight hauled from the north to the south in the morning, and reversed its route in the afternoon. Passenger trains came through town from the south in the morning, and returned from the north in the evening. The terminals of these runs were changed occasionally.

Until 1880 Strasburg was only a freight stop, and the depot was a small shed near where Schlechte's Lumber Yard now stands. Farmers would drive their cattle and hogs to town to sell to the stockyard, which was built near the railroad. About three times a year branded horses from the West were brought into town to be auctioned to the highest bidders. These came by way of rail. Cream, poultry (both live and dressed), eggs, and grain were all shipped to distant spots on the Wabash.

Then passenger service was introduced. A depot was built near the present ball park, and Strasburg was "on the map." Stations were built about six to ten miles apart so they could serve the small communities. The train could be flagged down at Buttermilk Station north of town, and a nickel would pay for a ride to town. Many people rode the train to visit nearby relatives, and in the teens and twenties high school students boarded the Wabash to go to nearby towns to further their education.

Both the railroad and the town thrived and grew with the advent of passenger service, but the city fathers were alarmed that these new-fangled machines should roar through town spewing sparks and scaring their horses. Accordingly, ordinances were passed prohibiting any locomotive to travel through the city at a greater speed than six miles an hour. The penalty for failure to observe the speed law would result in the railroads being fined

at least ten dollars. Fines would also be rendered against the railroad if any engine, train, car, or other obstruction impeded the free passage of teams or pedestrians for more than five minutes. It was also decided that the railroad should be responsible for construction of and maintenance of passageways and culverts on each and every street or alley through which it passed. This city ordinance was duly voted on and passed on July 13, 1894.

The railroad provided employment, and many young men sought jobs on the section crew. Pay-day was the nineteenth of each month, and workmen were paid by the month. If one started work on the first of the month, he would work fifty days before he got his check. Section men received \$1.15 a day. They were not paid on days when they could not work. It might even be possible for men to lose money working on the railroad, since they were charged fifty cents for board. For example, if a section man were hired on Sunday, July 1, he would be charged a day's board. If it rained on Monday, he would not work until Tuesday. Therefore, he would be charged for three days' board (\$1.50) and would receive \$1.15 in pay. He would be thirty-five cents in debt before he started. No wonder the old song went, "I've been workin' on the railroad just to pass the time away."

Nevertheless, many did find gainful employment and made railroadin' a lifetime career. During the railroad's existence there were four station masters: Al Davidson, Henry Faster, Orville Storm, and John Stearns. Some local railroaders were Charles "Tud" Wilson and Herbert "Bert" Wiandt, Bill Wilson, John Wade, and Otis Wiandt.

Just as the towns were dependent on the railroads, the railroads were dependent on the towns. Before the advent of the automobile and good roads, both were successful. In 1928 Highway 32 was constructed through the same towns which were being served by the railroad. As traffic increased on the highway, it decreased on the railroad. People drove their cars from town to town. More and more trucks were used to transport the livestock and grain which were once the lifeblood of the railroad. By the 1930's the Wabash was in financial trouble, and passenger service was discontinued. Two years later the railroad had ceased to exist, and the last vestige of it was removed as the tracks were torn up and the depots moved or torn down.



The Wabash making its scheduled stop at the Strasburg Depot.

The Laying of the "Slab"

It has not been too many years ago that the pavement going through the middle of Strasburg was simply a mud road. The route was known as the Grand Prairie Trail and the letters GPT were on the telephone poles along the road.

Marvin Ulmer recalls, as a small boy, the road through Strasburg before the "slab". What dust! Just like the township roads, it got its yearly grading, dragging, and a luscious coat of thick oil. A big mud wallow in the "pre-slab" days extended all the way across the road at the line between where Pete Buesking's and Carolyn Wallace's properties are now. In the winter when the ground was freezing and thawing, there was a rut in which vehicles could sink into up to the axle. This caused lots of trouble for funeral processions. Marvin remembers that the Stewardson Packing Company operated eight or ten trucks which went through town every morning, and when it was muddy, every truck had to be pulled through every morning. G. C. York was ever-ready with his tow truck.

Plans were made to complete route 129 through Strasburg, and in 1928 work was begun on the strip from route 16 south to where the high school now stands. J. J. Ransom of Palestine was contractor. Some remember John Anderson and son Cecil who had the bridge building contract. Three large bridges went in at Herborn corner, where Chas. Anderson now lives in town, and north of town where Larry Lenz farms now.

Spring, 1928, was rainy, and mud made the road work difficult. Hedges along the right of way were pulled out by teams. Road grading was done with horses and mules.

This construction work was, no doubt, good for the economy of Strasburg, Herborn, and Stewardson. During this time many road workers and their families moved into town, renting rooms from local citizens for \$5.00 a month. Some crew members stayed in vacant country houses, and some camped. There was a camp at Maple Grove, two miles south of Strasburg, on the Noffke farm, where workers pitched tents. Twenty-seven mules had been driven up from Olney, and these teams were kept here also. Later there was a camp north of town where Elmer Richards lives now. Bridge-

gang headquarters were in the northeast part of town, and Orville Bauer recalls picking up his paycheck there. A man's wages was 35 cents a day; a man plus his own team received 50 cents a day. Usually the crews worked ten hour days.

Rock, gravel, and cement were "shipped in" to Strasburg on the Wabash. Hug trucks and Model T Ford trucks hauled these supplies to the road site where it would be mixed and poured. Horse-drawn water wagons brought water from dammed up branches or from wells.

The July 26, 1928, issue of the *Strasburg Herald* contained an article about the road construction:

"The hard road outfit now working on Strasburg's new hard road probably broke, as far as can be learned, the world's record for cement pouring in one single day and for the time taken to put down one mile in consecutive days. Their record breaker of a single day was 1,1519 feet. There are other mixers of a larger capacity that have beaten this mark.

The work on a one mile stretch was done by J. J. Ransom's outfit in four days. This is considered an extra good run for a six bag mixer . . . As far as can be learned, "Susie" takes the cake. Mr. Ransom figures on starting on the north end of route 16 sometime Saturday."

There is a story about one elderly gentleman who, after the "slab" was in, never realized the danger of walking on it as he had in the days before the pavement. Someone concerned about his safety once cautioned him that he might be hit by an automobile. His quick retort was, "I was here before the "slab" was."—and that settled that.

Work on the "slab" through Strasburg probably ended the summer of 1929. W. O. Keller remembers the pouring of the last load of concrete at the Herborn crossing. It's printed in the October 6, 1932, *Strasburg Herald*: "Several Strasburg residents motored to Effingham Sunday afternoon to try out the recently completed slab on Route 129. It is a great road."

In 1965, the pavement was resurfaced. The asphalt plant was located on Dale Rincker's farm. In 1970, route 32 was again resurfaced and widened.

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Strasburg Homecomings

It's Homecoming time again! The young at heart, from one to ninety, have waited anxiously for the annual Strasburg Homecoming celebration each year since the early turn of the century.

Some of the first Homecomings were held on the Fourth of July with the festivities proclaimed by banners and flags waving from the Risser flagpole on their roof across the road east to the top

of Bill Telgman's barn.

Later celebrations were changed to the fall of the year and the program was a two day affair with carnival rides and concessions that arrived in Strasburg on the railroad. Old timers remember the glass blower, a greased pig contest, tugs-of-war across the pond, and, of course, the races across

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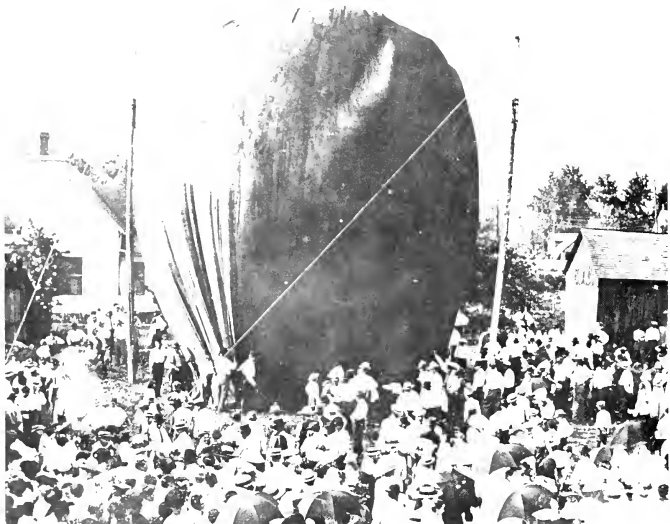
Fourth of July parade going west on Commercial Street—1900.



July 4, 1901—Speaker's stand, Band Boys and Dr. York (the oldest permanent resident of the village) Director of speaking and amusement. The stalk of corn on the table took the prize - height, 116 in. - the tallest bluegrass 60 in.

The Royal Neighbors, organized July 28, 1899, with twenty charter members, sponsored a float in the 1901 parade.





A balloon ascension during a celebration in the early days of Strasburg.



July 4, 1901—Float of Joe Backensto. After filling all positions on the R.R. from section hand to conductor for the past sixteen years, he moved here in April 1900 embarking in the saloon business. Last spring he added a cigar factory which is represented by his float.

Strasburg Band—organized in 1900. Building at left background is hotel which stood on present bank site.



1948 carnival at Homecoming. Looking east from Weber's Store. Rincker's Poultry House, Wm. Engel Hardware, and Post Office were later destroyed by fire.



Homecoming committee in 1933. Left to right are: George E. Kull, Frank Price, Rudolph Von Behren, Dr. S. C. Lorton, Orty Webner, Emil Noffke, Wm. Traue, O. A. Green, John Staehli, Chas. Krile, J. C. DeLaurenti, Wm. Engel, M. G. Ulmer, Wm. Wilson.

Crowd assembled to watch afternoon program during 1948 Homecoming. Stage was set on the street between the bank and Weber's Store.



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Weber's Pond in wooden tubs! Baseball and outdoor basketball games drew huge crowds. Hitching contests and horse races, talent programs, and balloon ascensions were highlights of past Strasburg Homecomings.

In the late 1930's into the 1940's, our town hosted large crowds who came for the annual free beef barbecue and the free fish fries.

Following is a report quoted from the September 14, 1934 *Strasburg Herald*:

The Strasburg Home-Coming sponsored by the association formed several years ago, is a matter of record now and it was one of the best ever held in point of attendance. The barbecue is a good head liner to get the people to come and it is gratifying to see everybody enjoy the sandwiches and coffee given out to them free. Five thousand sandwiches were disposed of in an hour and as far as is known everybody was pleased and along with them a cup of coffee to each if desired.

Dr. Lorton of Shumway supervised the roasting of three fine heeves and he did an excellent job of it. The meat was thoroughly cooked and its quality was first class. A large crowd of town folks looked on with intense interest Tuesday night while the fire was burning in the trench to make the bed of coals for the roast. It was all new and something different.

One of the interesting parts of the day's program was the entertainment at the north garage. Eight hundred people saw the afternoon and evening programs and at the small charge of 5¢ and 10¢, \$64 was the proceeds which was used to defray expenses.

Strasburg school band gave a short concert at noon before the serving of barbecues began.

The tango game furnished entertainment for those who like it. Two dances were held in halls

by private parties and in which the Home Coming Association had nothing to do.

A base ball game was played at the park by the Colored Swans of Decatur and local team. The result was 6 to 2 in favor of the home team. Rain prevented many from witnessing the contest.

The "tug of war" and foot races were the last event on the program. The foot race was won by Bill Kinsel of Bruce who is an all-round athlete and who pitched the game for Strasburg. Mr. Kinsel has been drafted as a player on the Cardinal ball team of St. Louis.

A note-worth thing of the day was the good behavior of the crowd. Only one arrest was made.

The program of the "Home Talent Variety Program" held on Wednesday, September 12, 1934 during that year's Homecoming read as follows:

HOME TALENT VARIETY PROGRAM

1. Music Stremming Bros.
2. "Hiram Blows In" Wm. Faster
3. Quartet Carl Kull, Bryan Renshaw, Delbert Smith, Merle Kull
4. Play "Just Out of the Hospital" directed by Mrs. Mae Young
5. Music Stremming Bros.
6. Play "Bell's Wife" East Salem Group
7. Quartet-Helen Doehering, Mrs. Ruby Hudson, Carl Kull, Merle Kull
8. Play "If I Were President" directed by Mrs. G. A. Schimmel
9. Music Stremming Bros.
10. "A Small Boy's Troubles" ... Marvin Ulmer
11. "Moving Day" Marjorie Engel
12. "Kerchoo" Junior Storm
13. Music Stremming Bros.
14. Play "A Sick Coon" ... Carl Ruff Lloyd Buesking
15. Music Stremming Bros.

Admission 5¢ and 10¢ York's North Garage



John Deere Days in Strasburg.

Since that time, Strasburg's Homecoming has become a three day and night celebration with commercial entertainment, midway rides, queen contests, tractor pulls, farm product displays, pet parades, and prize drawings.

A few of the local men who organized the Homecomings during the 1900's include Max and Floyd Weber, Dale York, Donald Webner, Bill Hamm, Orville Engel, and Roy Rincker. For more

than ten years, Emmert Weber, Marion Small, and Roy Kull were responsible for the success of the food stand.

For the past fifteen years, Homecoming has been held at the Strasburg Park instead of down Main Street, and in 1967 the Strasburg Lions took over sponsorship of the Homecoming. Homecoming Days still remain a highlight of the years' activities for Strasburg area citizens.

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With a Song in their Hearts

Those who helped Strasburg grow from a handful of stores on the prairie to a flourishing town are described as industrious and hard-working peoples. Yet they, too, found time for family fun which sometimes grew into entertaining which the entire community enjoyed.

The Herman Diepholz Family first picked up their musical instruments in the evenings for their own enjoyment. They learned melodies by listening to the victrola. Neva (now Mrs. Carl Buesking) was at the piano. Lorene (now Mrs. Orty Baumgarten) played the violin with her father. Melvard had a guitar and a violin, and their mother took turns at the piano. The family soon played for "house dances". Andy Bauer or Herman Diepholz would call at these dances after a couple of rooms were cleared and the rugs were rolled back. The schottische, the polka, the waltz, and square dancing were enjoyed. In the summer, barn dances were scenes of gay crowds. Dances were also held above Dick Storm's Store or Fred Kircher's Hardware Store in Strasburg.

With 50¢ of gas and the Old Dodge loaded with trap drums, violins, a mandolin, a banjo, and guitars, the group was ready to go wherever music was needed—chicken fries, homecomings, dances, community plays, and class plays. Melvard served in WWII, and he died at age thirty-three from wound complications. Following this, the family group ceased to play publicly.

The three youngest sons of August Stremming, farmer in the Strasburg area, are known as the Stremming Brothers. Wilbur got a guitar when he was about fourteen years old. He worked for Ed Doeding, and he learned to play by chording along with Doeding. Later Gilbert began playing a violin while Eddie, the youngest, picked up a five string banjo and later, a mandolin.

The boys played together on the porch at home. Then they began furnishing music at school houses, for weddings, during programs, and for "hoe-downs". Dances were held in barns or houses near Windsor, Middleworth, Trowbridge, and Strasburg. Andy Bauer's house, barns owned by Dave Rincker, Emil Noffke, Henry Vonderheide, and August Doeding's barnlot all were scenes of evenings of fun. It's been said the Stremming Brothers never



Pictured are Stremming Brothers.

turned down a "job". In the 1930's they were sponsored by local merchants several Sunday afternoons on the radio station WDZ at Tuscola.

Music was provided throughout the community by the Stremming Brothers until the late 1950's.

St. Paul's Orchestra played at church affairs, such as German picnics, mission festivals and church anniversaries. Orchestra members recall traveling to Blue Point and to Altamont. The orchestra also entertained at birthdays, weddings, and other "socials". This group played over a period of ten to fifteen years with most members taking part for five or six years each. World War I called many members away, and the group disbanded.

The Strasburg Band, another village group, had a concert at the bandstand every Thursday night. Other engagements included marching at homecomings, playing at the three day Hammond County Fair, and at horse races at Shelbyville. Under the directorship of Alf Duling, Everett

Haney, or Grant Gibler, the village band entertained until the early 1930's. Later school students gave public band concerts here.

Merle and Carl Kull, sons of Henry Kull, sang at countless weddings and funerals in the community, not to mention programs, box suppers, and Chautauquas at Shelbyville. Sometimes with two others, the boys formed a quartet. Their sister, Ruby Hudson, often accompanied them.

The children of Virgil Collins were very musical, and they have also entertained in the area.

In many rural school houses, Community Clubs met monthly and various musical groups of

the area entertained.

Bill Widdersheim, an accomplished violinist, who came to Strasburg around 1915, is noteworthy because he had played with the Philadelphia Philharmonic. Occasionally in this community he played for the public.

In 1963, the two Strasburg Lutheran churches along with Trinity of Stewardson began presenting special Christmas concerts. The churches involved take turns hosting the concert.

Music is still a part of Strasburg's community life, as church choirs, the school band, and talented individuals harmonize.



St. Paul's Orchestra under direction of teacher A. H. Scheer. First row bottom: Fred Doeding, Ed Doeding, A. H. Scheer, Ed Buesking, Herman Diepholz. Second row: Ed Hartman, Emil Ulmer, Chris Diepholz, Theo Von Behren, Edwin Stremming, August Doeding. Back row: Martin Mueller, Otto Wirth, Hugo Wirth, Wm. Juhnke, Westerman.



Strasburg Concert Band and Bandstand about 1925. Back row standing left to right: Roy Storm, Edwin Metzler, Don Henne, Theo Von Behren, Fred Unruh, Emery Duling, Warren Storm, Vern Oliver, Albin Foelsing. Seated: Bert Wiandt, Bill Fester, Arthur Unruh, Albert York, Elma Duling, Chris Kircher, A. C. Duling, Everett Henne.

Disasters!

FIRES

"The whole town's on fire!" That was the cry that went out from all those who were awakened early in the morning hours of March 11, 1963 and looked toward the main part of Strasburg. Indeed several buildings on the south side of the main street were destroyed and a large vacant space was left. This brought to mind earlier times when fire leveled business buildings and left ruin and devastation in its wake.

On at least two occasions a hay barn was burned in the east part of town causing great danger to other buildings and considerable loss to the owners. Hay barns were used as large warehouses for storing hay bought by a dealer and shipped to out-of-town buyers or sold to local farmers.

Probably one of the most tragic events in the town's history occurred when a young business man suffered fatal burns as he was carrying out his duties. Albert Faster, whose brother William has been well known to all in the community, lost his life at the age of 22 in January, 1902. He was a clerk in the General Store owned by J. E. Weber and was getting ready to light a gasoline lamp for night's work, as stores were open late every night. As he was pumping air pressure into the lamp, the gas bowl of the lamp exploded and scattered gas over his clothing. A spark from the stove set fire to that end of the store and to the young man. Young Mr. Faster ran out into the street toward a pump at a well before the owner could reach him and he suffered deep and painful burns. He was taken home, but medical aid could not save his life.

Ten pounds of gunpowder under the counter of the store exploded and the shock and report of the blast were felt and heard many blocks away. The explosion put out the fire so that the goods were not destroyed and the building did not burn, but it was wrecked beyond repair. Every window glass was broken and walls were bulged out and joists over the cellar were splintered. Fortunately, there were no customers in the store at the time, but Mr. Weber suffered burns about the face and hands as he tried to reach the young clerk and smother the flames.

The post office, located in the southeast corner of the building, was occupied by the young man's father who was Postmaster. When the elder Mr. Faster saw the blaze in the other part of the building, he began to gather books and records and was rushing out with them when the explosion threw him out into the street. Many of the older citizens still tell about this event.

Late night or early morning seem best, or rather, worst for fires. Fire fighters were called out early one February morning in 1947 when the tavern and pool hall operated by John Anderson and George Lloyd, and located on a corner in the center of town, were demolished. Although the near-zero temperatures almost froze the hoses to the street and the fire truck was festooned with icicles, the

firemen were able to prevent the flames from spreading to other business places. Water was used from a well until it was drained and from the stream near the tavern. The furnishings and stock of the tavern were destroyed along with the buildings, and operators of nearby stores began to pile merchandise in the street in case the fire spread to their buildings. An overheated stove or furnace was thought to be the cause. Unaware of the tragedy, the bar keeper, Martin Mueller, came to work at his usual time to find that not only was there no bar, there wasn't even a tavern!

Again, very early in the morning of March 11, 1963, an alarm went out and firemen and villagers were confronted with a blaze that threatened the whole down-town area. Before it was contained, half a business block was destroyed, taking four store buildings, one of which was empty. The old Postoffice building, owned by George E. Kull, was gone with an estimated loss of \$4,000.00. Although it was not being used as the Postoffice, some articles were stored in it. The fire was thought to have started in the Lowry Hardware Store, run by Don Lowry. This business had been purchased from Wm. W. Engel Sons. The entire stock was destroyed, with a loss of \$25,000. A brick building at the rear of the hardware store, which in times past had been used as an old ice house, was also lost. The Juhnke Poultry building suffered a loss of \$10,000. A corrugated siding on a canopy across the driveway of the Juhnke building stopped the blaze from continuing on to the nearby buildings. Driven by a strong east wind, the burning embers were tossed into the air and endangered other buildings. Helpers were busy on roof tops, sweeping off burning bits of wood and putting out the fires started by them. Charred pieces were found beyond the northwest edges of town. Windows were broken by the intense heat in the Weber building across the street. Everyone helped as much as possible, and the American Legion Post and Auxiliary opened its hall to serve coffee and donuts to the workers.



Fire! Former Post Office Building ablaze.

On February 10, 1965, a \$40,000.00 fire which began about 10:30 a.m. destroyed the Dale Young Mfg. Co. plant and a building owned by Martin Pfeiffer. The buildings stood across the street east of the town fire-house. Apparently the



Above: Firemen silhouetted against the blaze. Below: Morning after. (fire photos by James Kull)



fire broke out in the paint spraying room, and was seen and reported by Burl Hobson from his home across the street, when smoke began to come out of a ventilator. Dale Young, the owner, suffered burns on his head and arms, and was taken to the hospital. The Pfeiffer building had been used in conjunction with the funeral home and had been used for storage.

FLOOD

The stream flowing through Strasburg from east to west is familiarly known as "The Branch". In times of fire a dam was hastily thrown across the stream to collect a supply of water, which was used by the pumper in addition to the water in the city wells. Most of the time the branch runs serenely along, and in summer is almost dry, but at times of heavy rainfalls, it, too, can go on a rampage, as is evident from the news item taken from the local paper in June, 1957:

Strasburg Little Prepared for Seven-Inch Deluge

The dark clouds loomed menacingly, and the rains came, but Strasburg was little prepared for the seven-inch deluge which descended on the territory Thursday night and early Friday morning.

Three families awoke to find themselves marooned in a sea of water. The houses of Orval Bauer, Silas Boyer and Alvin Kearney were completely surrounded by water. His basement flooded, Orval Bauer waded into the waist high water in an attempt to salvage food from a floating deep freeze.

The road which passes the three residences was impassable with water high enough to permit use of

a row boat. Two local men, Don Lowry and Dale Young, were enjoying the unexpected pleasure of main street boating when their boat was suddenly caught in the undertow of the Kearney bridge and they were unceremoniously dumped into the surrounding water.

Mr. and Mrs. John Radloff were celebrating their ninth wedding anniversary with a "night out" at the Mattoon theater. They arrived home at 9:30 a.m. Enroute from Mattoon, they, along with many other motorists were stranded on Highway 16 because of high waters, and were forced to spend the night in their automobile. The last seen of Howard Wirth about 10:30 a.m., he was wandering the streets hoping the water east of town would lower enough for him to drive the 2½ miles home.

Water flooded Highway 32 forcing Dale York and Earl Renshaw to construct mud dikes to keep water from flowing in the basement windows and doors at street level. The Renshaw parking lot was completely under water.

Most Mattoon workers took an enforced vacation as highway 16 was closed to traffic.

SNOW

Heavy snows and teeth-chattering temperatures are not uncommon in this area, and may have occurred more often in the "Olden Days", but there was not quite the inconvenience then, because most people could stay at home and wait until such time as the roads were cleared or they could get out with horse drawn sleds or on foot. With more modern vehicles, a blizzard paralyzes traffic, and that is what happened when a ten-inch snow blanketed the area on Sunday, January 16, 1964. The deep drifts made travel impossible, and some who were able to get to church that morning found it difficult to get home again. By Monday, all highways in the area were closed, and state crews worked around the clock, trying to keep the roads open, but high winds would blow the tracks shut before the return trip. Township workers were unable to conquer the drifts, but where they did get through, the snow was piled up in high banks, which would again drift shut. Cars and trucks were stalled and travelers were stranded, and some had to be taken in by local families. The grocery store was soon sold out of bread and milk, and new stocks could not be delivered. School buses could not run, and schools were closed on Monday, but opened again Tuesday. Service stations were swamped with calls for towing service, tires, chains, and batteries. Temperatures dipped to zero at night, adding to the discomfort and hardships.

DROUGHT

In this community we are so used to spring rains, and occasionally a summer flood, that whenever there is a period of more than a couple of weeks without a shower, especially in summer, the residents begin to ask one another, "Is this going to be another '54?" Many people can recall some very dry and hot summers, but none of these made such a deep impression as that extremely dry period in 1954-55 which is referred to as "The Drought."

Lake Paradise, near Mattoon, was almost completely dried up, and people could experience what it felt like to drive a car across the lake bed, which was hard and solid except for the deep cracks which seemed to divide the ground in blocks.

The extremely hot weather brought the introduction of the first air conditioners, which have since become a normal piece of equipment for the home and office.

Water had been in short supply all year, and by summer the effects began to be felt. Crops had been put in as usual, and were growing, but after several days of temperatures over the hundred mark, and no rains, the full impact of the drying winds became quite evident when the thermometer reached 114° on the 14th of July. From then on, everything seemed wilted, and corn grew only a few small flinty ears on stalks about a yard high. Wells that had never been dry before now failed, and water had to be hauled in periodically for use in

many homes. Most country people had livestock and poultry that also had to be supplied. The town wells on the business street were very popular places, as many families relied on the water they could carry home from them, until one of these also went dry.

Residents would scan the skies hopefully to catch sight of a cloud that might contain moisture, but they were few and far between and even the distant rumble of thunder was like music. Some efforts were made to "seed" the clouds in order to produce rain and Rain-makers became very popular, although not very successful. Deep cracks appeared in the ground and grass became dry and brittle and almost non-existent, so that lawn mowers could be stored away unused. Those people who washed their cars became very unpopular, as everyone was required to conserve as much water as possible. Everyone learned to appreciate the simple gift of a refreshing rain and a drink of cool water.

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Faith of our Fathers - The Story of our Churches

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Some years before the actual founding of Grace Church, it became apparent that there was a need for Lutheran worship services in the English language. In the fall of 1896, this was discussed at a meeting at St. Paul's. The congregation at this time was not ready to hold services in English, but the pastor, Rev. A. Werfelmann, made arrangements for seminary students and faculty to preach at a vacant public school building in town for Lutherans who preferred English. This building was just west of the present church structure, and it is still standing, now on the Wm. Brehmer farm.

In February, 1897, the first English Lutheran service of this little group was conducted by Student Wenchel. Attendance at following services increased, and soon the schoolhouse was filled on Sundays. When the building was to be auctioned off in June of 1897, the question arose where services would be held. Ed Klump, James F. Kull, and Henry Spannagel decided to purchase the building, and the price paid was \$400.00. Thus, a permanent worship place was provided before the new congregation was formally organized. The seven signing the constitution in August, 1897, were Henry Spannagel, Edward Klump, Chris Kircher, John E. Weber, James F. Kull, William Brehmer, and John Depner.

Grace Church obtained its first pastor, Rev. Martin Daib, in 1899.

A parsonage and a stable were built in 1901. The parsonage was located where the church now is; it was moved north when the church was built. The stable was on the west end of the church property.

The congregation grew, and in 1912 a decision was made to construct the present brick church building. In 1914 this temple of worship was

dedicated by a membership of over two hundred. The church's interior with oak altar remains basically the same today as when built.

Rev. G. Schimmel served Grace the longest, from 1920 until his death in 1937. During this time the two bells named "Faith and Love" were dedicated. Until recently, these bells would toll out the old year, and ring in the new at New Year's Eve Watch Parties held in the church basement.

Young men of Grace have always represented the community in the military service. During the years of World War II when Rev. Metzendorf was minister, forty young men of Grace served in the military; thirty-two of them on overseas duty. All but one returned; Kenneth Wilson was lost on a ship in the Mediterranean in 1944.

The church's 50th anniversary was celebrated in 1947. Many remember the special Mission Festival Sunday observed each fall. Potluck meals and three church services with emphasis on mission work was the order of the day.

In recent years, many improvements have been made. A new office building was erected in 1961, and in 1965 the brick parsonage was constructed. Latest church interior decorating was done in 1972.

Active church organizations include the Ladies' Aid (organized in 1911), Men's Club, Walther League (since 1922), Fellowship Club, and the choir. A vacation Bible School is held each summer, and Grace Church has helped organize a new congregation in Sullivan. Youth instruction is provided through the Sunday School program and the Saturday confirmation classes.

Oldest members at this writing are Louise Gierzt, Henry Kull, Fred Lenz, and William Kull. Membership grew steadily until a peak was reached in 1945 with 355 total members. Rev. M. Kam-

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St. Paul's Church and School

Grace Lutheran Church and
Parsonage (1912).



The Grace Lutheran Church and Parsonage,
Strasburg, Ill.



Grace Lutheran Church as it
appears today.



Strasburg Baptist Church.



United Methodist Church before it was remodeled.



Strasburg First Baptist Church built in 1962.

United Methodist Church today.



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mrath, pastor since 1962, now serves a membership of about 270.

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Lutheran settlers in this community hailed from Chicago, and they settled on the rich prairie lands south of Strasburg. With the help of their former pastor in Chicago, they got Rev. H. W. Rincker of Terre Haute, Indiana to come to Strasburg in the early 1860's. By 1866 a congregation was organized. First church officers were: Frederick Bauer, John Falk, Sr., Frederick Wirth, John Kircher, G. Nehring, Carl Brehmer, John Ruff, and Wm. Wangelin. First church services were held in homes or public schools, and later in a building on the Rincker farm near Herborn, just south and east of where the Stewardson-Strasburg School stands now. Rev. F. W. Schlechte was the first resident pastor, and he also served surrounding territories.

Land one and one-fourth miles south of Strasburg was donated by Gottfried Pfeiffer and here a 20' x 30' church was erected. When additional land was bought, a parsonage and a cemetery were added here.

Since the membership increased rapidly, a new church was constructed on a more centrally located plot in 1875. Christian Spannagel, contractor, built the church for about \$4,000.00. The original church property south of town was used for schooling until 1884. This second church interior featured a high pulpit, a balcony around three sides, an altar draped of red velvet, a coal stove, and coal oil lamps. German was the language used in the church. Members sat during the services with women and children downstairs and the men in the balcony, and the church officers in the cross

benches at the front of the church. Singing was led until a pipe organ was installed in 1882. The original church bell is still used. Members recall the bell ringing on Saturday evening reminding all of worship service on the next day.

In 1897 some church members who preferred speaking English helped organize Grace Lutheran Church.

Rev. C. F. Keller and 875 church members celebrated the church's 50th anniversary in 1916. A throng of people estimated at 2000 gathered at south Strasburg to celebrate this happy occasion. Dinner and supper were served and it reminded one of the Biblical feeding of the 5000. Morning and afternoon services were conducted in German and the evening service in English. Three founders, John Ruff, Wm. Wangelin, and Frederick Wirth, were still present.

About thirty St. Paul's men were drafted into World War I, and the following died in service: Henry C. Lading, Fred Nippe, F. W. Pieper, and Andrew Ruff. During these war years there was a transition to the English language in the Church. During the 1930's the congregation held twin services on Sunday, one in German and one in English.

In 1941, the congregation redecorated the church, installed a new oil-o-matic heater, and reconditioned its pipe organ. In June 1941, St. Paul's observed its 75th anniversary with three services. Rev. L. Stuebe was serving the 653 members at this time.

Kenneth Buesking and Paul Stuebe were the first men of St. Paul's called into service during World War II. The service flag at the front of the church was taken down in December, 1946, when Arthur Unruh, Jr., the last of the fifty-one men, had returned home or reenlisted.

Plans were made for a new building in 1949. Cornerstone laying services were held for this on October 11, 1953 and were conducted by Rev. Howard Kramer, who attended St. Paul's Lutheran School for eight years. He was the son of Wm. A. Kramer who taught at the school for twelve years. In 1954 the present house of worship was dedicated while Rev. G. A. Lueck was pastor.

St. Paul's church has been served by eleven resident pastors since its beginning. The Rev. C. F. Keller and Rev. L. Stuebe each served sixteen years. The congregation maintains a parsonage, and two teacherages east of the church building.

The congregation, now in its 107th year, numbers about 600 members. Active church groups include a Men's Club, Ladies Aid Society, Walther League, P.T.L., and a choir. The church supports a Sunday School, Bible class, and a day school.

Presently, oldest members are Sophia Spannagel, Sophia Lenz, Emilia Lenz, Mary Ulmer, Viola Ruff, Minnie Kasang, Martin Buesking, and August Doeding.

STRASBURG BAPTIST CHURCH

The Richland Regular Baptist Church was organized in August, 1875. This early congregation shared the Richland Church Building north of Strasburg with three other congregations. Elder T. M.



St. Paul's Church, 1916.

Griffith from Windsor served as first pastor for the group.

Wanting a church building of their own, these early members erected a place of worship in Strasburg, and the group moved its services to town in 1893.

Now the church's name was changed to the First Baptist Church of Strasburg.

Many improvements and changes have been made over the years to the church property. In 1907, a brick walk was built on the west side of the property. A piano was purchased for church use in 1918, and electric lights were installed in 1919.

The original church structure was torn down in 1962, so that the present building could be erected. An annex was built in 1966, and in 1972 the church members added a parking lot.

Church membership has varied throughout the church's history. In 1907, eighty members answered roll call. Currently, membership totals about fifty-five.

Oldest members now are Addie Richards, Fairie Renshaw, and Florence Staehli.

METHODIST CHURCH

About 1885, a group of non-Lutheran Protestants began to feel the need of a church of their faith in Strasburg. It was decided that a Methodist Church should be started. Since these would-be Methodists were few in number and limited in cash, they began having prayer meetings in their homes. Soon they established a more formal service, using the Strasburg Public School building (west of the present Grace Church), and in 1888 they decided to build a church. To raise the money, some young ladies of the congregation, Jennie Rankin Martin and Jennie Kale Spannagel, went around the countryside collecting salable products, such as potatoes, eggs, butter, corn, and poultry. Proceeds from the sale of these items made a tidy nest egg. Meanwhile Luther Kale (father of the late Mrs. Wm. Spannagel) tucked his Bible under his arm and solicited funds from local businessmen.

After the erection of the building, Rev. Miles Hart came from Windsor and preached each Sunday. Benches without backs were the first seats used. Later a reed organ was added and Nellie Beck Kircher chordeed the Methodist tunes so people could join in congregational singing.

As the years passed, the benches were exchanged for chairs. Two large round oak stoves were used for heat. Oldsters remember the large Christmas tree with candles all colors and lit with a match. Besides a house of worship, the church was a social center with programs, hayrides, and picnics enjoyed by all.

A new Sunday School room and social hall were added onto the church in 1954. Latest building improvements were made in 1970 when the church interior was paneled.

The church's young people are active, and the Methodist ladies formed a society known first as the Ladies' Aid, now the United Methodist Women Society.

Strasburg's Methodist Church is proud of its members who have gone into the ministry: Earl Stiervalt, Karl Cowell, Paul Curry, Ernest Duling, and George Terry.

The congregation currently numbers about 107. Rev. Donald A. Graham is pastor.

RICHLAND CHURCH

Early settlers felt the need for a Protestant Church which could be used by many denominations. Therefore, in 1867 five gentlemen got together and purchased a tract of land on which an interdenominational church could be erected. These men—Samuel Renner, Sampson Casky, L. H. Turner, Joseph Hayden, and Harvey Blair—bought a tract about three miles north-west of Strasburg from Lorenzo and Cynthia Turner and the Richland Church was built. It served as a church home for five major religions in the territory; Baptist, Methodist, Christian, Church of God, and Unitarians. In the tradition of the day, all day preach-ins were held with the people spreading their lunch under the trees for a communal dinner. Revivals were popular and people from miles around would gather to hear the evangelists.

Because it was the meeting place for all denominations, it was not unusual for the church to be full of God-fearing Protestants who loudly proclaimed their amens from the benches. As Strasburg grew, the Baptists and Methodists left to start churches of their own in the nearby village. The church was later taken over by the Methodist Conference, but services were discontinued there in the early 1950's. The building no longer stands.

ZION EVANGELICAL CHURCH

In the late 1850's a church was organized, and a frame place of worship was erected three miles south of Strasburg and one mile east. This was on the corner of the John Kasang farm, and the church was always referred to as Kasang Church.

This circuit church was one of the earliest in this area, and families who attended included the Bredows, the Fritzes, the Beckers, Rosines, Tabberts, and Reeces.

After disbanding around 1920, most members joined with neighboring Methodist congregations. The church building and furnishings were sold at an auction, and the ground was returned to the Kasang farm.

WESLEY CHAPEL

As early as 1855 a class led by Wm. Carnes met at the East Salem schoolhouse where Don Westenhaver now lives. The Methodists gathered here soon felt the need for a church building, and in 1875 Wesley Chapel was constructed about eight miles west of Strasburg. The church was completed under the ministry of J. C. Burkett at a cost of \$1,200.00.

This original building was torn down, and some of the lumber was used in 1942 when the place of worship was rebuilt.

Until 1968 Wesley Chapel was a part of the Strasburg Circuit and was served by the same minister who led worship in Strasburg.

The present pastor is Rev. Robert L. Foulk, who resides in Clarksburg.

The congregation at Wesley Chapel is noted for its community socials, soup suppers and icecream socials, which until recently were annual affairs.

GASKILL CHAPEL CHURCH

According to legend, the first M. E. church to serve the southwestern part of Ash Grove was a log church in a grove of twelve sycamore trees just west of Drake Creek. This original building burned during the Civil War, and a brick church was built. The brick came from one-half mile north up Drake Creek. The solid walnut seats therein were made by James Wiandt, carpenter and violin maker.

One of the first preachers was Allen Gaskill from whom the church probably got its name. He is buried in the adjoining cemetery. Some of the first church members were Gaskills, Evans, Worleys, Brandts, Carruthers, Becks, Everharts, Storms, and Neighbors.

The "brick church" stood as it had been constructed until 1954 when a storm tore most of the roof from the building. The church was then re-roofed and many improvements have been made since then.

In 1960 the first Bible School was held, and it has been a successful project ever since.

Gaskill Church's 100th year was celebrated in 1969. Presently church attendance is about thirty-five, with Sunday services conducted by Rev. Don Graham of the Stewardson-Strasburg Circuit.

LOWER ASH GROVE CHURCH OF CHRIST

In 1832 Rev. Jackie Storm organized a Christian Church in a log cabin at Ash Grove, and people in the southern part of the township attended there. Country churches flourished in those

days because travel was a town for services was impossible.

Later another Christian minister, a Rev. Lynn, was instrumental in encouraging the people of south Ash Grove, and in 1882, a meeting was held at the home of John O. Storm to plan the building of a house of worship. A building committee consisted of Noah Gaddis, James Storm, James Polk Bennet, William Simms, and John Abercrombie. These men commissioned Hilliard Doll to erect a frame church to cost \$140.00. Location was one-fourth mile west of Gaskill.

In 1886 Drake Creek Church, as it was named, was renamed Church of Christ.

This church was moved to Keller Cemetery in 1908, and it is still located here. The building has been remodeled and is in good condition. It is three and one-half miles east of Strasburg on a knoll with woods on three sides.

Pastor Gaylon Wells of Xenia presently serves the congregation.

LIBERTY HALL

Liberty Hall was located two miles south and three miles east of Strasburg. This rural community building was built in 1876 on land owned by George Hiatt. It was a wooden-A-shaped structure of donated lumber from nearby sawmills. Oldtimers say round steel nails were used in the building.

Neighboring preachers, as well as traveling evangelists, all stopped and held church meetings at Liberty Hall. Community reunions were held once a year here with those attending bringing basket dinners.

Some of the first families who attended Liberty Hall were the Jensens, Polsons, Lundeens, Russells, Figginses, and Hiatts.

In later years, people began drifting away and attending churches in nearby towns. The Seventh Day Adventist group who used Liberty Hall consolidated with the group in Stewardson. In the early 1950's Liberty Hall was razed.

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School Days

RURAL SCHOOLS

*"Still sits the school house by the road,
A ragged beggar sunning,
Around it still the summac grows,
And blackberry vines are running."*

Most of these "ragged beggars" are gone now but wonderful, nostalgic memories will always live for those of us who were a part of our rural communities.

Early rural schools might not compare favorably with present day standards, but they had their mission and fulfilled it. Perhaps they were more appreciated than schools today.

The rural school was not only a source of learning, but it was also a community center. Annual wiener roasts, pie and box socials, spelling bees, community meetings, Christmas programs, and last-day covered dish dinners drew the neighborhood closer together.

The first school houses were made of hewn logs, earthen floors, and greased paper windows. Furniture was benches of split logs. Shelves served as desks. The room was heated first by fireplaces, then pot-bellied stoves, and finally by huge jacketed furnaces that scorched those near them and the heat never quite reached the far corners of the room. Sanitation facilities were the two three-holers (two large, one small) located in opposite corners of the school ground behind the school house and reached by cinder paths.

The teachers were usually local people who

passed from one school to another, often returning to a school they had taught a few years before. Some were cultural and occupational misfits who could survive by no other means. But more were fine, dedicated men and women who helped shape a growing, strong community. The percentage of poor teachers was probably no greater then than can be found today in reorganized schools. At any rate, many of Strasburg's most successful men and women received their basic, and often only, education in the little rural wooden school house.

Schools in Strasburg area included Richland, Rockford, Hiatt, Elm Grove, Pinhook, Whitlatch, Mayflower, and Prairie Hall. The Whitlatch School history is typical of the history of most rural schools in this locality. A record book, kept in this school district since 1869, is at present in the hands of Ed Reel.

It is recorded that Joshua and Nancy Whitlatch sold a parcel of land for sixty dollars to the trustees of the School District No. 3.

Andrew C. Ensminger was hired on October 18, 1869, to teach the school for six months for \$300. There were five boys and ten girls enrolled at the beginning of the term. By April, 1870, thirteen boys and fifteen girls had attended the school. There were forty-eight in the district of school age. August Shanholtzer, B. Mose, and J. F. Martin were school directors.

One hundred years ago, on September 14, 1874, the teacher was Thomas Robison. Sixty-five pupils were enrolled in the school. Directors were Wm. Richards, Joshua Whitlatch, and J. Martin. "The numeration in 1874 was as follows: total number under age 21—140; over 6 and under 21—85."

In 1881 J. J. Kull was paid \$688.00 for building a new school house and \$18.00 for two back houses. This school burned in 1910.

The daily schedule for a one-room school was about as follows: At 8:00 a.m. children started to arrive at school. They played out doors if weather permitted. If not, games were played inside, seat-work done, or the older children assisted the teacher with chores.

At 9:00 "books took up." Usually ten or fifteen minutes were spent in opening exercises. This consisted of singing songs, reciting poetry, or reading a book of classic literature by the teacher or an advanced pupil.

"Books" started with the chart class being called to the recitation bench and sounds were taught. Next was the first reader class. As each class finished reciting, it was given seat work and the next class was called forward. Reading classes were required to read aloud in a monotonous "school tone." The classes were called forward and dismissed with, "Rise, pass, be seated," from the teacher. Reading classes lasted until 10:30 when school was dismissed for recess. This was fifteen minutes of free play. What fun! A snack from the dinner bucket and some uninhibited running and jumping released the tension and prepared the children for the hour and fifteen minutes of numbers, cyphering, and math that followed and lasted until the 12:00 to 1:00 lunch period. Lunch

buckets were usually lard buckets. These carried homemade bread sandwiches, fruit in season, and once in awhile a cookie or cake. As winter wore on, lunch might have been bread and molasses and a jar of cold soup beans. Games consisted of shinny, ball (using a home-made string ball and a hedge club), fox and goose, and running and circle games. If the teacher had time, he or she played with the children. Pranks, such as filling Hugh Hillsabecke's boots with water and allowing to freeze, were punishable quickly and thoroughly to the tune of a hickory stick. No one questioned the right of a teacher to whip a child and no one worried about the psychological effect it would have on the child, school, or neighborhood. Discipline had to be maintained or the teacher was marked as lazy and out of control.

At 1:00 "books" was resumed. English, geography, history, literature, penmanship, and a smattering of health or physiology made up the afternoon classes.

Every other Friday afternoon, if the week had gone well, from 2:30 until 4:00, the program was changed or "they had the evening off." This meant a geography contest, cyphering, or a spell-down.

Some of the old text books were Beacon Chart, McGuffey Reader, Young and Field Copy Books, and Gowdy and Dexheimer English.

Teachers who taught in these early rural schools in the Strasburg locality were: A. Ensminger, F. Allen, E. S. Gifford, Maud Flours, Thomas Robison, Doria Cummins, W. W. McCrory, Nellie Woris, G. A. Bowman, Emma McCalister, Ethel Barker, Oscar Storm, Emma Flemming, Fred Grabb, Hugh Hilsabecke, Fern Lowery, and Lee Frazier.

In 1943, rural schools were consolidated with urban schools into Unit 5A. Gradually the school houses and contents have been sold or otherwise disposed of. Many of the records have disappeared. Some precious pictures, odd books, and other relics have been preserved. As with most things of the past, these objects and memories connected with them take on the aspects of treasures from a happy era, gone forever.

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN SCHOOL

From the time that the congregation was organized, St. Paul's Church has maintained a Christian Day School, so that the children of its members could receive a thorough training in a Christian doctrine along with their elementary education and so that all subjects would be taught in the light of God's Word. This school was first held in the church building which was located about one and one-fourth miles south of town, and was taught at that time by the Pastor, F. W. Schlechte, who carried on this duty for about two years, until the services of a called teacher were secured. The enrollment the first year is recorded at forty pupils.

When a new church structure was built at the south edge of Strasburg in 1876, the school continued at its first location. Thus, the school and church were not adjacent for almost eight years,

and pupils taking instruction for confirmation had to walk to the church and then back to the school. In 1884, a school building was erected on the church property about where the present social hall now stands. Only one teacher had charge of the pupils during this time, and although the enrollment varied, most of the time it was well over a hundred, and reached as much as 124. The children were arranged in two rows at desks and seated on long benches that held seven pupils. Older and more advanced students helped with the younger children. The teacher was usually strict, and the leather strap, hickory stick, or ruler was never too far away. For those who didn't know their lessons, there was the bench in the front dubbed the "Eselbank", which took the place of the conventional stool and pointed cap. Some teachers were here for long periods, and some were not, but the longest tenure of office was held by Teacher F. W. Toenies, who served for a total of twenty-two years, and in the latter years was teaching the children of former pupils.

When a new two-story building was erected in 1905, the school was divided into upper and lower grades, and the one-room building became known as the "Old School House," and still was very useful as the social hall for meetings of the various organizations of the church. The teaching staff was now doubled when a second teacher was called. Each pupil now had an individual desk which was equipped with an ink bottle that was filled from a large jug of blue-black ink provided by the school. Penmanship was a must, and was practiced regularly with a pen-holder and "scratch" pen. These pens were bought at the store downtown for a penny apiece and were supposed to work better if they were held in the mouth for a few minutes to "break them in". The ink was of the non-washable variety, and fingers and clothing sometimes acquired some strange new designs. That may be one reason why dark clothing was worn most of the time.



St. Paul's School built in 1905.

The "new" school building had a belfry to house the bell that could be heard to signal the beginning and ending of the school day, as well as the recess and noon hour periods. As they advanced to the upper grades, boys each received the privilege of a weekly turn at ringing the bell. The boys in both rooms also carried in coal and kindling to start the fires in the two coal-burning stoves and to keep them going during the school day. These large stoves provided the only heat for the building until a furnace room was added and a furnace was installed to heat the two school rooms, the halls, and stairway. The teachers then had the responsibility of maintaining the heating system.

Much of the school work was done on the blackboards and this created a lot of chalk dust. The girls were assigned to wash the blackboards and clean the erasers. This latter was done by taking all the erasers outside the back door, and clapping them together.

Since German was the mother tongue of most of the members when the school was first started, that was the language used in school for many years. Later on, religion was learned in both German and English, as were reading, writing, and grammar. The pupils who came into school with no knowledge of German didn't take very well to these added subjects, and during the mid "20's" the English language became the only one used.

After the turn of the century, St. Paul's School reached its highest enrollment, 140 in 1906 and 1907, and maintained a level of more than one hundred until 1919.

During this time the teaching staff usually consisted of two male teachers who were installed into office and also served as church organists. Among their other congregational duties was that of choir director or youth leader. Some of the teachers most remembered are S. C. Brauer, Paul Potratz, Wm. A. Kramer, R. F. Nordbrock, A. H. Peters, E. F. Onken, E. H. Lehenbauer, and John Neunaber.

Students carried lunches to school in tin dinner buckets until 1954 when the school's hot lunch program was begun.

A third teacher was added to the staff in 1962, and a temporary classroom was made in the social hall of the present church. The two-story building was taken down in the spring of 1964 and was replaced by the present stone structure which is connected to the church. This new school was dedicated in 1964, and contains three classrooms, furnace room with gas furnace, principal's office, multi-purpose room, and work room.

St. Paul's School maintains high academic standards, and is state accredited. Pupils graduating from eighth grade receive a diploma from the county superintendent in addition to one from the congregation, and many are on the honor roll in high school and college. The present enrollment is forty-one, and Mr. Ricardo Flores is principal.

One of the highlights former pupils will remember with nostalgia were the picnics which were held on Sunday following the close of the

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Basketball team of 1921-22. Left to right are: Harold York, Orval Engel, Max Weber, Bryan Renshaw, Olin Kull, Lauren Hamm, and Kenneth Boling.

Hoop Drill by Upper Grades at St. Paul's School 1915-16. Pupils in front row: Cona Risser, Gilbert Ulmer, Clara Mueller, Frieda Rincker, and Florence Stremming.



St. Paul's pupils grades 1-4 in 1924. Front row: Alfred Gertz, Clark Schmitt, Orville Lenz, Nolen Biehler, Melvard Diepholz, Honore Lenz, Carl Mueller, Ralph Schimmel, Curtis Ostermeier, Maurice Ruff, Eugene Bauer, Carl Buesking. Second row, seated: Valeria Noffke, Dorothy Stremming, Deloris Buesking, Mary Brauer, Ruth Schroeder, Beulah Doehring, Sylvia Mueller, Johanna Meyer. Third row: Leona Ruff, Nita Vogel, Etta Reel, Erwin Lenz, Harry Doehring, Herbert Mueller, Roy Rincker, Lucille Ruff, Lucille Myer, Teacher, Paul Firnhaber.



St. Paul's pupils, lower grades—1946. Front: Roger Nippe, Gaylord Unruh, David Schmitt, Gaylord Stremming, Frankie Brandt, Leverett Doehring, Melvin Lenz. Second Row: Richard Doehring, Paul Pieper, Larry Lenz, Frederick Buesking, Michael Weber, Leon Ruwe, Arnold Schlechte, Curtis Von Behren, James Nippe. Standing: Esther Cress, Caroline Lading, Christine Stremming, Nancy Reed, Shirley Pieper, Vera Ulmer, Shirley Doehring, E. F. Onken, Beverly Frede, Marjorie Ulmer, Beverly Lading, Neva Lenz, Donna Lou Frede.

St. Paul's, upper grades—1946. Front row: Glen Pieper, Gene Lading, Charles Doehring, Ralph Buesking, Kermit Ruwe, Keith Stremming, James Stremming, Glen Spannagel, Harold Kircher. Second row: Richard Pfeiffer, Delbert Ulmer, Lawrence Stremming, George Buesking, Wm. Buesking, Eugene Pieper, Clyde Stremming, Arthur Buesking, Wayne Wirth, Kenneth Pieper. Standing: Robert Pfeiffer, Wayne Buesking, George Schlechte, Kenneth Von Behren, Alma Cress, Margaret Kircher, Doris Onken, Loretta Lenz, Beulah Stremming, Bertha Lenz, Ruth Meyer, A. F. Winterstein, Mary Jane Lading, Laveta Stremming, Ruth Pieper, Dorothy Rincker, Joyce Weber, Retha Buesking, Bettie Schlechte, Grace Spannagel, Robert Stremming.



Pupils of St. Paul's — 1966.

school year, which in earliest years came at the Fourth of July. At first the picnics were held in the woods a few miles away, and all would join in a parade to the grounds. Later they were held in the grove of trees behind the school building. A refreshment stand was erected, and became the most popular place on the grounds for buying ice cream cones, pop, hamburgers or hot dogs, and many novelties in great quantities throughout the afternoon and evening. Besides serving as a reunion for friends and families, the picnics provided entertainment for the large crowds in attendance. A program was given by each room, one in the afternoon and one in the evening, with a band to provide music between times. At one period of time, Allen's merry-go-round was a much enjoyed part of the day, and all the pupils were given a free "trial" ride on Friday after watching the process of setting up the many pieces of machinery which made up this wonderful piece of entertainment. Races and contests were provided for each grade and all the new clothes were initiated. Times and changes brought an end to these festivities. The P.T.L. members now have a potluck dinner on the last Sunday in the school year, and each room entertains in the afternoon.

The Wabash Railroad track ran along the west side of the school grounds, and the trains came and went on their daily schedule without too much distraction. However, on one particular December day in 1931 the engineer blew a series of short blasts on the whistle, which may have been a fire alarm in railroad language. At any rate, it attracted attention so that a fire on the roof of the school house was discovered, and firemen were called in time to put out the blaze without too much damage. No one was injured, but it took the rest of the year to straighten things out. It's been said that the blackboards were damp for several weeks afterwards.

STRASBURG PUBLIC SCHOOL HISTORY

The Northwest Ordinance in 1789 stated that each township in Illinois must provide a school for its children. Accordingly, in 1832, the first schoolhouse was erected in Richland Township where the old townhouse is now located. It was built of round hickory logs with greased paper windows to admit the light, and here the students came to learn their readin', writin', and 'rithmetic.

About forty years later a second schoolhouse was built on the site just west of where the Grace Lutheran Church now stands. It was a one room frame structure similar to the old one room rural school where one teacher taught all the grades.

Strasburg was growing, so in 1895 a four room brick building was erected two blocks north of the old school. This showed foresight on the part of the school board, for at first only two rooms were needed. At this time there were only two teachers, and one of these served as principal. In 1904 a third room was put to use. The teaching staff had grown to three: Bertha Hoese (York), Ethel Barker (Duncan), and Frank White, who later be-

came County Superintendent of Schools in Shelby County, and was noted for his ability to call the students throughout the county by name.

Older members of our community still chuckle about the pranks sometimes played on the teachers. One Halloween the janitor, A. A. Beck, was the object of tricksters' fun. He went out to milk his cow, and not finding her, he went on to school. There she was in the school!

Spelling bees were afternoon treats for students, with Friday afternoon activities being the highlight of the week. Classes put on special programs for the entertainment of other classes, and teachers and pupils alike enjoyed this break in routine. Holiday programs, school plays, costuming on Halloween, fall carnivals, and last days of school, are fond memories of many.

As the need for more schooling became apparent, it was decided to establish a two year high school, and the upstairs of the building was used by these older students. First graduates from the two year school in 1907 were Nellie Metzler, Bruce Curry, and Walter Wiandt.

Some students graduated from the eighth grade at the parochial school and were confirmed, and then they attended eighth grade at the public school, preferring that to entering high school. Perhaps it was as Bill Faster used to remark, "The folks would send the kids back to school for another year mostly because there wasn't much else to do."

By 1920 Strasburg boasted a three year high school. The two teachers on the staff were C. F. Sheets, principal and teacher, and Wade Steel. English, algebra, civics, and history were the courses offered.

The four room building was bulging at the seams by 1923. More and more people were prolonging their education through the eleventh grade. To solve the problem, a temporary white frame building was constructed on the west side of the school. That fall the high school students moved into the new building promptly dubbed "The Sheepshed."

Within two years the old brick school had completely disappeared, and in its place stood a new one which would solve (hopefully) all future overcrowding problems. Down with the sheepshed! Everyone moved into the fine new building with its basement floor consisting of two playrooms, a furnace room, and two restrooms. On the first floor were three classrooms and a teacher's workroom. The high school occupied the top floor with a large assembly, three classrooms, and a principal's office.

In 1927-28 J. C. Lucas was listed as principal and teacher. Mr. H. T. Jackson and a Mr. Schafer also taught at this time. Ruth Nippe and Bertha York taught the fifty-two elementary students. There were thirty-three in the three year high school.

In 1930 students graduated from the three year high school, but during the summer the fourth year of schooling was added. Some 1930 graduates returned to school in the fall and were graduated again in 1931, this time from a four year

high school. Graduation ceremonies were held in various town buildings and halls, or in churches. Prior to the four year high school, students wishing to continue their education had to board in nearby Shelbyville, Sullivan, or Windsor, and attend classes there, or ride "Green's Train" to school. Enrollment in 1934 was fifty-eight in the high school, and forty-three in the grades, with John DeLaurenti serving as superintendent of both.

Despite the handicap of no gym, Strasburg boasted a fine basketball team. Practice was held in a field north of the school. Ballgames were played, not at night, but after school in the great

outdoors "gym." Transportation to other games was difficult. When playing Windsor, our players often boarded the Wabash, played the game, and then walked back home.

As a W.P.A. project in 1939, a fine gymnasium was constructed and the athletic program was expanded. This gym was named "Duling Gymnasium" after Alf Duling, who had been school board president for years and was instrumental in obtaining this structure for the district. Board members when the gym was dedicated were Dick Storm, Orville Engel, and G. C. York.

(continued on page 59)



Strasburg Public School built 1895.

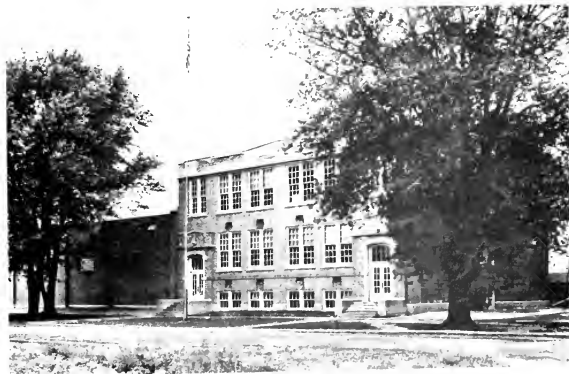


"Sheepshed" used for high school in the 1920's.



Inside the "Sheepshed", row 1: Fred Lading, Luella Kull, Agnes Ulmer, Bertha Stremming, Dorothy Hicks, Everett Richards, Clifford Stilabower. Row 2: Luella Spannagel, Agnes Binghamman, Bernadine Berkhart, Floyd Weber, Alice Kull (Ulmer), Esther Kull, Mae Luce, Leonard Mueller, Ralph Martin, Row 3: Florence Spannagel, Lois Martin, Maurice Buesking, Lulu Young, Kenneth York, Dorothy Swigart, Floyd Ulmer, Howard Kearney, Roy Renshaw, Everett Renshaw. Row 4: Emma Spannagel, Helen Bonnet, Laura Kull, Lona Binghamman, Gail Rankin, Orville Klump.

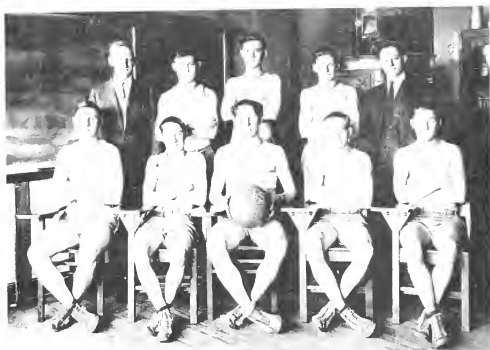
Class of 1931—First four year high school graduates: seated: Marie Weber, Charles Binghamman, Beulah Renshaw. Standing: Pearl Schroeder, Eugene Rankin, Beulah Williams, Basil Metzler, Lorene Diepholz, Donald Storm, Virginia Stern.



Strasburg Public School and Gym.



Upper grades of Strasburg Public School, 1922. First row: Bernadine Burkhart, Dorothy Hicks, Fred Gill, Raymond Schwartz, Agnes Bingaman, Vera Metzler. Second row: Lois Martin, Andrew Bullerman, Geneva Kull, Gervase Duling, Fredia Bullerman. Top row: Helen Bonnet, Clarence Ruff, Floyd Weber, Joe Rawlings, Mary Burkhart. Teacher: Mrs. Nona Munson.



1923 Basketball team, front row: Clifford Stilabower, Howard Kearney, Everett Renshaw, Maurice Buesking, Leonard Mueller. Back row: Floyd Weber, Everett Richards, Kenneth York, Arlie O. Brien.



Strasburg School District's first school bus and Carl Buesking, driver—1943.



Ball team of 1928-29. At left is Coach Leroy Baker with players of the "outdoor gym" era: Ralph Lading, Dale York, Harold Russell, Donald Storm, Morris Griffith, Basil Metzler, Charles Bingaman.



Strasburg School students—picture from the 1947 Hourglass.



Staff of the 1936 Reminiscencer, Strasburg high school year book. Left to right are: Woodrow Wilson, Ruby Doeding, Ruby Culver, Olin Wirth, Grayce Schröder, Evelyn Ruth Storm, and Lawrence Krile.

1954 S-S Basketball Squad with a record of twenty-seven wins and four losses. They won second in National Trail Tourney, third in Shelby County Tourney, and first in State Regional Tourney, finishing at the top of the National Trail Conference. Seated: Wayne Wirth, Art Buesking, Dwight Friese, Floyd Storm, Van Anderson, John Moomaw, Slug Unruh. Standing: John T. Middlesworth, Bill Engel, Ralph Allsop, Ron Webb, Frankie Brandt, Bob Mathews, Kenton Ashenbramer, Harry Ray Bivins, James Sheehan.





Whitlatch School pupils with
Oscar Storm, teacher.



Hiatt School—1895.



Richland School Dist. 107—1913. First row: Troy Blythe, Orval Kull, Tom Price, Lawrence Jones, Clarence Robb, Carl Delp, Carl Pfeiffer, Harry Sporleder, Elmer Doehring, Loyd Spurgin. Second row: Glenn Caskey, Festus Waymire, Fred Siren, Ruby Sporleder, Florence Spurgin, Leah Lading, Gletha Jackson, Ruby Siren, Mary Cress, Celia Kull, Florence Lading, Helen Jones, Rosetta Spurgin, Clara Lading. Third row: Tobe Kircher, Walter Jones, Walter Schrimpf, Elza Caskey, Glenn Waymire, Iva Robb, Grace Doehring, Rosie Krite, Anna Pfeiffer, Nellie Griffin, Esther Doehring. Fourth row: Sam Sharpless, Howard Cakay, Hobart Jones, Harry Robb, Elbert Griffin, Frieda Engel (teacher), Floyd Robb, Howard Price, Albert Doehring.

The first schoolbus was purchased in 1941, and in December of that year students were transported to school for the first time. Carl Buesking, first bus driver, picked up pupils east of the highway, dropped them off at school, and then ran a western route. Before this time, many students attended rural centers of learning, and the town students, naturally, walked to school.

In 1941 board members now numbered five: Lauren Hamm, Orville Engel, Everett Storm, Fred Rincker, and Glen Radloff. Leonard Hewitt was the principal.

Principals following Hewitt include Walter Wilson and L. T. Elam. Some of the teachers in the Strasburg High School in the 1940's were Sylvia Diel, Dorthy Anderman, John T. Middlesworth, Marie Weber, Jack Young, Thelma Thompson, Nona Bell Cruise, Paul Barnes, Mrs. Porter, and Charles Kell (who was drafted during the school year.) Graduates of 1944 remember that some boys in the class quit to go into service, and so did not graduate. During this period, seventh and eighth grade pupils had a fine course of study, including shop for the boys and home economics for the girls.

County superintendents always paid unannounced visits to the classes two or three times during the schoolyear. Each teacher and his room tried to put their best foot forward when "visitors" came. J. Kenneth Roney, county superintendent from 1939 to 1951, recalls Strasburg as a school which never had serious problems as some of the others did.

In the late 1940's the high school that had seemed so large was becoming pretty crowded. State regulations made consolidation necessary among smaller school districts, and Strasburg was faced with a difficult decision. The entire community was concerned. Should we combine with another town to form a new district, or lose our own territory completely to encroaching districts? Some discussed combining with Windsor schools. A decision was finally reached. We would unite with Stewardson and Mode to form a unit to be known as Stewardson-Strasburg Unit District 5A. Some local linguists suggested we combine the name into either Stewburg or Strasson, but the long, unwieldy name is still used, although the common title is shortened to S-S.

A bond issue for a new school building carried in November of 1949. Twenty acres of land was purchased midway between the two towns, and the cornerstone for the new S-S Community Unit High School was laid September 22, 1950. The first superintendent of this consolidated unit was J. Harold Diel.

For a time the high school students were divided, with the freshmen and sophomores attending a temporary center in the old Stewardson school building, and the juniors and seniors of the district housed at Strasburg. The hot lunch program began now in 1951, with Martha Hood and Effie Wheat hired as first cooks at Strasburg. A modern kitchen was made in the south dressing room near the stage.

The move to the new school building was finally made, and the entire high school was united in October, 1951. Now the unit junior high attendance center, with Roscoe Hash as principal, was at Strasburg in the top floor of the building, while grades one through six attended school in their own towns. A lower grade school was maintained at Mound School until about 1950, and Mode was used until 1960.

The last step in the school building program was taken in 1967. After construction of a new elementary center added to the high school plant, all students in the unit, kindergarten through senior high school, were bussed to the same building.

Stewardson-Strasburg Unit District 5A now covers 112 square miles and student enrollment totals 521, of which number 192 pupils are in the high school and 329 children are enrolled in grade school. There is an approximate yearly payroll of \$436,000.00, with a staff of thirty-six certified personnel. Four cooks and three helpers work in the cafeteria each school day; seven bus drivers are employed; four secretaries and four janitors are on the payroll. The newest additions to the curriculum are an art program and a high school building trades program, through which a home is being built in Stewardson. Unit superintendent is Lloyd T. Elam. High school principal is Donald P. Harrison, and Ralph Buesking is elementary principal.

The first Strasburg school boards consisted of three members, and some of the earliest members include Reuben Spannagel, Rol Bartlett, Harry York, Martin Pfeiffer, and Alf Duling. Later the



Stewardson-Strasburg Community Unit 5A.

board was made up of five members. In 1951, at the time of consolidation, unit board members were Roy Rincker, Albert Vonderheide, Ed Reel, Clarence Wittenberg, G. A. Brummerstedt, Arthur Krumreich, and Glen Garrett. Present board members are Fred Gallagher, Joe Moomaw, Derry York, Bob Bridges, Charles Kessler, Gene Ohnesorge, and

Dale Wirth.

Strasburg's schools have a history filled with many outstanding teachers and dedicated board members. The names mentioned in this writing are but a few of these. A love of learning has always been a gift of the school system to the children of Strasburg throughout the years.

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"For God and Country"

The community of Strasburg has always done its part when our country was engaged in war activity. During World War I, not only did it give time and money, but it gave the best of her boys. Patriotism was shown by the citizens who responded to the Liberty Loan Drives, for the people were really awakened to their government's needs. The Red Cross worked regularly to send supplies to the soldiers and provided a comfort kit to each boy as he left for camp. Socks and sweaters were knitted and sent to the men in service. Of the scores of

County, having received three medals, the Distinguished Service Cross after being wounded, and two French decorations, the Meadille Militaire, and Croix de Guerre with Palm. Susa Risser was officially cited for valiant service. Harley Gill was wounded slightly, and Herman Doehring was gassed and had to spend several weeks in the hospital. All the young men who served during World War I were patriots, bravely doing their part for peace and freedom.

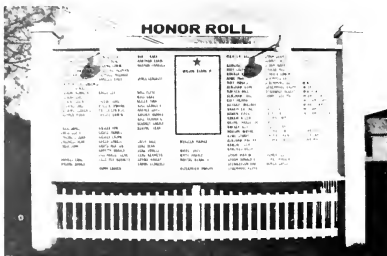
Because of war raging in Europe, the first American peacetime draft act became law on September 16, 1940. A Selective Service System was set up and the young men of Strasburg community soon were called into the armed forces for training. On Sunday morning, December 7, 1941, when the alarming news of the bombing of Pearl Harbor was announced over the radio, our country became involved in war with Japan, and subsequently with Germany. Now our service men who soon could have been returning home had their time extended until six months after the end of World War II. Nearly all able-bodied young men in the community left their homes to serve their country, and many took an active part in the conflicts in the European or Pacific war areas. An Honor Roll Board containing the names of all those in service, was erected in a prominent place along the highway. Two young men of Strasburg paid



Red Cross Members during World War I. Left to right: Nora Weber, Ida Weber, Myrtle Ulmer, Aurora Hamm, Lydia Faster, Lizzie Ulmer, Oma Kull, Tillie Storm.

men who went from the community, four gave their lives for their country. The first casualty, Henry C. Lading, lost his life in the torpedoing of the transport, *Moldavia*, as he was crossing to France. Andrew E. Ruff was killed during the battle on the Hindenburg Line. Frederick W. Nippe contracted bronchial pneumonia after leaving an American port and died on the high seas. Henry Fred Pieper died of pneumonia after eight months in service at the base hospital at Camp Taylor, Kentucky.

As the boys returned from the battle fields of Europe, heroes were found among them. Elmer P. Richards is the most decorated man in Shelby



Honor Roll of Strasburg's service men in World War II.

the supreme price by giving their lives. Kenneth Wilson, at age of twenty-three, was lost at sea in

the Mediterranean with his entire company when his ship was hit by an aerial torpedo on April 20, 1944. Clarence Baumgarten, a tail gunner in a bomber, was missing in action when his plane was lost over Europe. After almost thirty years, the wreckage of the plane was found and his identification confirmed. Melvard Deipholtz was wounded and left for dead on the battlefield of Okinawa. Later he was found, taken to Tinian, and then flown to California. He was brought to Great Lakes Naval Station for surgery and was discharged in April. After only four months at home, he became ill with malaria and then pneumonia, and died in July. Earl Daniels was wounded and captured and held prisoner by the Germans. Strasburg also had several young women who joined the service during World War II.

Not only was the absence of the boys noticed at home, but people left at home were made aware in other ways that the war was going on. Food, gasoline, shoes, and many other items were limited. All families had to register, and a ration book was issued for each member. According to need, gasoline stamps were apportioned to drivers of cars.

These were valid for a certain period. Then a new series of stamps was issued, and the old ones were useless. Stickers reading "Is this trip really necessary?" were available to be put on the dash or inside the windshields of cars. Everyone was urged to plant a Victory Garden to supply more food. Empty tin cans, toothpaste tubes and cigarette packs were to be saved and turned in for collection. For better handling, the cans were to have both ends cut out and the cans smashed flat with the two ends placed inside. The tubes and cigarette packs were saved for the lead and tinfoil. Sugar for canning was allotted according to need, and many began to can fruit without sugar. Whenever such scarce items as rayon hose or facial tissues did become available, a long line of customers would form in hopes that the supply would last until they reached the front of the line. War Bond drives were held to encourage people to invest their money to help carry out the heavy expenses. Waste was discouraged, and everyone was urged to patch clothes and conserve everything possible. A slogan was put out that all were asked to follow: "Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without."



Volunteers await their turn to donate blood to the Red Cross blood bank. Strasburg has always been proud of their blood donation records. Over the years they have repeatedly met their quota.

Both pictures depict one of the blood banks held in the 1940's in Strasburg High School Gym.



It is said that World War II killed more people, cost more money, damaged more property, and affected more persons than any other war. The war ended on September 2, 1945, and special services were held in the local churches to mark the event.

The Korean War began on June 25, 1950, and fighting ended on July 27, 1953. Although this was not a declared war, many men from the community were drafted or enlisted in the armed forces, for the United States rushed great numbers of troops and supplies to the aid of the South Koreans. The Korean War was one of the bloodiest in history, but Strasburg had no casualties.

With the drafting of young men continuing, the community could hardly realize when the Korean conflict ended and the Viet Nam fighting began. Strasburg was well represented with enlist-

ments and drafting. It was a hard decision for a high school graduate to plan on a further education or to enlist and serve his country. David Boyer was wounded in action and he received the Bronze Star for valor in action and also the Purple Heart. Steve Giertz was wounded in action and received the Purple Heart, and also the Air Medal for more than 100 air assaults. In one month he took part in ninety air assaults. He received the Combat Infantry Badge and the Viet Nam Campaign and Service Medals. Ronald Cress received the Army Commendation Medal for bravery. During the year of 1973, this war has ended and most of our young men have returned home. Our hope is for a lasting peace as a reward for all those who courageously fought for our country.



Depression Days

As the 1930's came along, they brought the depression. Strasburg and its community suffered the same as everywhere else. Prices went way down and there was a lot of unemployment. This indeed was a sad time for many people. Some lost their life savings and even those who had always had plenty, almost became destitute. Corn was down to ten or twelve cents a bushel; beans down to thirty-three cents; fat hogs were two to two and a half cents a pound in Indianapolis; fat cattle were down to three to three and a half cents. In some cases an old sow or thin cow didn't even pay the hauling bill.

Hired labor on the farm was a dollar a day or twenty-six dollars a month. Corn shucking was one cent a bushel. Broom corn cutters received ten cents an hour. Gasoline was ten cents a gallon and some customers bought it by the dime's worth. Others charged it when they didn't have the dime.

A plate lunch could be bought for twenty-five cents including the drink. Sandwiches were a nickel.

A Chevrolet sport roadster with rumble seat was priced at \$495. F.O.B. Ford cars ranged from \$430. - \$630. F.O.B.

Coal was \$3.50 a ton at the mine. However, some people having plenty of time and no money, went in groups and did some strip-mining in the Trowbridge area. The coal was of very poor quality but the people did manage to keep warm.

Money was so tight that in January of 1932, President Hoover made a plea to the nation, "Put hoarded money in circulation."

In spite of hard times, the federal government raised the postage on a letter from two to three cents, July 1, 1932.

During 1932, twenty-four persons in Shelby County were subjected to bankruptcy proceedings. Illinois led in farm bankruptcies at one time. A farm in the Middlesworth area was sold for \$27.50 an acre. One in the Mayflower area sold for \$21.00

per acre.

The federal government passed a bill known as the McNary-Haugen Bill in 1932. This was a farm program to try to ease the crisis among farm people. It had various phases, but the one most remembered was the hog or pig program. Hogs were so cheap, the government bought little pigs, killed them, and made them into tankage. This program wasn't accepted very well among the people of this vicinity. They couldn't bear the thought of wasting this meat. However, farmers who sold their pigs to the government, got more money than the man who fed his corn to the hogs and then marketed them.

In April of 1932, Shelby County received 40,000 pounds of flour made from government wheat. It was distributed to the needy, through the Red Cross. Dr. Schroeder, of Strasburg, head of the Red Cross in this area, distributed these twenty-five pound sacks.

The federal government set up an agency officially known as Emergency Conservation Work, but later it changed to the more popular name of Civilian Conservation Corps or C.C.C., in April 1933. This program was to provide employment among needy families; specifically for unmarried men between the age of seventeen and twenty-three. Several boys of this community received employment in this way. The government paid thirty dollars a month. The boys received five dollars and twenty-five dollars was sent to their folks. To name a few projects carried out in this area: a grove of black locust was planted to check erosion on a farm, now owned by Ralph Reel; another such program was carried out on a farm that was and still is owned by Rozetta Fling; dams were built to stop erosion on a farm now known as the Schmitt Estate; multiflora rose was planted on the Raymond Schultz farm. The only cost, to the owner for this work, was the material used.

On May 6, 1935, the federal government set up another program known as Work Projects Administration or W.P.A. This program was to cope with unemployment brought on by the depression. Nearly a fifth of the nation's workers who otherwise would have been on relief, benefited in this program. Several from this area received work in this way. They were paid fifty-seven dollars

a month. In this community, a road was graveled from the west edge of town, west to the township line. At least four bridges were built in this area by W.P.A. labor, as was the gymnasium on the old high school in 1939. The government paid all labor and for a certain amount of material used in all projects. This program was phased out at the end of June, 1943.

Clubs of Yesteryear

Crochet Club

During World War I when the local boys were away and the village girls had nothing to do, the Crochet Club was organized. They held meetings in the evenings until around 1920. Members included: Etta Risser, Lena Wilson, Drucella Kull, Agnes Keller, Lydia FASTER, Elsie Siering, Rosie Ruff, Cora Ruff, Lula Ruwe, Mathilda Doebling, Emma Henne, Clara Bauer, Elsie Nippe, Rosa Risser, Rosie Bauer, and Lottie Schmitt.

Marquette Club

Records were found of a club in Strasburg's history that lasted only five months in 1895. Elaborate by-laws governed the "Marquette Club", which began with fourteen members and soon grew to thirty. Officers were Joseph Lowary, Pete York, Pete Wallace, and Ed Storm. After holding weekly social meetings and sponsoring a couple platform dances, the club records were stopped and no further record of the group can be located.

Stitch and Chatter Club

Many of the ladies of Strasburg spent afternoons sewing and doing handiwork, either for themselves or for others. In 1924 three ladies: Maye Storm (mother of Rip Storm), Jenny Martin, and Nellie Bingaman began an afternoon Stitch and Chatter Club in order to enjoy others' company as they worked. At first only a handful of women attended. Later there were twenty-five or thirty ladies listed as members, who took their sewing baskets to meet at each other's homes for work, "gossip", and refreshments. After the day's stitching was put aside, the hostess served and the school children dropped in, just in time to snack, of course. Members included current pastor's wives, teacher's wives, and local seamstresses. The group remained active until the late 1960's.

Parent-Teacher Association

In Strasburg's early history, the entire town used the schoolhouse as a gathering place for social events. Spelling bees, geography matches, orations,

debates, and plays were monthly entertainment for students and adults alike.

From these gatherings arose a loosely-knit group known as the Strasburg Parent-Teacher Organization which preferred not to be bound by the formal national P.T.A. Teachers with their pupils prepared programs throughout the year, and local parents presented plays, quizzes, and other forms of entertainment at the monthly meetings. Refreshments were served, and large crowds attended. Younger children crowded on the lower bleachers, stamping their feet in approval as their older brothers and sisters performed. Students gained poise and stage presence in these productions, and it became a part of the learning process, as well as a fine opportunity for townspeople to become familiar with their school. Membership fees were ten cents a year, and the entire town was canvassed. Community-school relations were at a high, with school doors "open" and all welcomed.

In 1952 the new Stewardson-Strasburg High School was opened, and the parent-teacher group was re-evaluated. The parents now joined the national organization, and 136 charter members formed the S-S Parent-Teacher Association. First officers were: Floyd Swank, president; Maurine Kull, vice-president; Marcella Brummerstedt, secretary; Charles Augenstein, treasurer. Following presidents were: Fred Patterson, Velma Weber, Orville Engel, Mabel Keller, Charles Quast, John Warren, and Vera Alwardt.

This group worked closely with the schools for ten years, but in 1962 they disbanded. Many worthwhile programs were presented including lectures by state police officers and the first woman Illinois Cabinet officer. Taking part in the state scholarship program, this unit was proud of two district scholarship winners from our school: Yvonne Brandt (1956) and Patsy Kessler (1958). Nutrition classes for adults were sponsored by the P.T.A., and various money raising projects were held to further school activities.

Later, other attempts at forming parent groups have been made, but at the present, no such group is functioning.

Today's Organizations

Senior Citizens' Club

Thirty interested area senior citizens organized in the Strasburg Community Building in October, 1971. Monthly meetings are held with a potluck dinner being served. Although the group meets primarily to have a good time, on some occasions topics are presented or travel slides are shown. First officers were: Merle Buesking, Rufus Kull, and Frieda Lading.

The club is still growing. Fifty or sixty people enjoy attending each month.

* * * * *

Lion's Club

Nineteen men of the community charted the Strasburg Lions' Club in February, 1956. They were: Leslie Drake, Lloyd T. Elam, Fred Gill, Oscar Hood, James Jeffers, Don Keller, Ivan Keller, Walter Keller, Ken Knop, Frank Laurent, Don Lowry, Robert Merriman, Dale Rincker, Leon Ruwe, Glenn Schauburger, James D. Sheehan, Milo Smith, Don Webner, and Dale York.

Annual events sponsored include the Strasburg Homecoming each summer, the June Chicken Fry, Santa's Christmas visit, fruit distribution to the home-bound to those who live alone, and the summer ball program at the park.

Monies raised by club projects go toward community improvements and to national club projects. The park pavilion was one of the first club projects; and the local Lions, along with the American Legion Post 289, are responsible for the new Community Building erected in 1971.

Men who have served as president are: Ken Knop, Don Lowry, Ivan Keller, Gene Kull, B. C. Stilabower, Roy Rincker, Delbert Stremming, Silas Boyer, Clarence Buesking, Carl Buesking, Larry Lenz, Guy Juhnke, and presently, Bob Falk.

Strasburg Lions' Club has grown steadily and present enrollment is sixty-one members.

* * * * *

Strasburg Unit of the Shelby County Memorial Hospital Auxiliary

Many of our townspeople used the Shelby County Memorial Hospital at Shelbyville, and there developed an interest in Strasburg in supporting the hospital. Shelbyville auxiliary members talked to Strasburg ladies and on April 1, 1963, the Strasburg Unit of the Shelby County Memorial Hospital Auxiliary was organized with three members. They were: Mrs. Carl Buesking, Mrs. John Neunaber, and Mrs. Floyd Weber. By the end of that year, they grew to six members as Mrs. David Schultz, Mrs. Walter Schwane, and Mrs. Elizabeth Diepholz joined. Membership currently is thirty-five to forty ladies.

The Strasburg Unit does all it can to expand the services of the hospital and to aid the new Medical Center. Several members do hospital volunteer work, tray favors are donated, birthday flowers are presented to patients, and community fund-raising events are sponsored. All proceeds go to the hospital.

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Square Dancers

The local square dance group consists of about twenty couples of Strasburg. They hold dances twice monthly in the Community Building. Any square dancer is welcome, and crowds sometimes number nearly one hundred. Local couples take turns hosting the affair, and finger foods are provided by Strasburg dancers.

Various callers are featured on the yearly schedule of the dance group.

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4-H in Strasburg

The first 4-H club in Strasburg is reported to be the "St. Paul's Busy Bee Sewing Club", started in 1925 with Mrs. Schroeder as leader. Members were Marie Weber, Pearl Schroeder, Nita Vogel, Oma Lading, Eda Roellig, Leona Ruff, and Leta Roellig. Other leaders of this group were Mrs. Anna Wirth, Grayce Schroeder, Florence Lading, and Faye E. Webner.

Throughout the years there have been more than 350 members involved in various 4-H activities in the Strasburg area.

In 1929 the "Lucky Four Leaf" club is recorded with Mamie Kircher as leader. Mrs. Eliza Falk led the "Flying Needle" club in 1935.

According to 4-H records, the "Homemakers Club" began in 1937 with Lena Wilson as leader. Other adults who helped this club are: Martha Hood, Ava Jean Griffith, Mrs. Honore Lenz, and Vera Ulmer.

In 1944 Mrs. May Richards led the group named the "Happy Healthy Helping Hands". Mrs. Vernie Doehring also helped this group, which was last listed in 1949.

The "Richland Merry-makers" was led by Mrs. Wm. Smith, Jr. and by Maurine Krile in the 1940's.

Lillian Lenz led the "Willing Workers" in 1948. Other leaders listed are: Viola Lueck, Mrs. Fred Krile, Mrs. A. Goldberger, Wanda Ensign, Martena Elam, Patsy Lenz, Chris Storm, Kathryn Schmitt, Mary Keller, Sandra Figgins, Roberta Ensign, Carol Schmitt, Helen Smith, Norma Rose Crutcher, Lila Storm, Karen Glawatz, and Maxine Doeding.

In 1960 Betty Lowry organized the "Bonnie Belles". Helen Smith, Mrs. Wilbur Waters, Grace Kull, Patsy Lenz, Ruby Krile, Marilyn Patterson, and Gail Rincker have helped with this group.

Dale Rincker and John Smith began the "Strasburg 4-H Stars" in 1968. Dave Smith has also helped lead this club.

Presently the two clubs in the area are the "Bonnie Belle" club with twenty-three members, led by Gail Rincker, and the "Taitwisters", with seventeen members led by Dale Rincker.

* * * * *

Home Extension

The Richland Unit of the Shelby County Home Bureau was instituted in September, 1936, at the home of Mrs. Willie Smith, near Strasburg. First

officers were: Mrs. Willie Smith, chairman; Mrs. Oscar Storm, vice-chairman; Miss Mamie Kircher, secretary-treasurer. This group was automatically a part of the county, state, and national group.

In 1962 the county organization name was changed, and the local group became the Richland Homemaker's Extension Unit.

Many tours, trips, and educational activities highlight the unit's projects.

Although the unit serves in the annual 4-H and Junior Fair food stand, the group is not as active as formerly. Several charter members, ages eighty to ninety-two belong, but cannot participate in all programs. Current attendance includes: Ethel Duncan, Maye Krile, Addie Richards, Bertha Storm, Mary Ulmer, Viola Ruff, Louise Gillins, Lena Weber, Frieda Brehmer, Mary Krile, Marie Rincker, Nina Widdersheim, Velma Weber, and Gail Rincker.

* * * * *

American Legion Post 289

The Liberty Post of the American Legion was organized in Strasburg in 1919. The first Commander was Edwin H. FASTER, and first Adjutant was Charles Throckmorton.

The first members, including charter members, were: Harley Gill, Henry Popendieker, Charles Wilson, Fred Popendieker, Charles Throckmorton, Charles Rosine, George E. Kull, Martin Mueller, Martin Tieman, Edward Doeding, Nelscn Ruff, Herman Doehring, Martin Nippe, Charles Williams, Theo. Von Behren, Arthur Unruh, Glen Waymire, Edwin Ruwe, Albin Foelsing, Lawrence Kendall, M. G. Ulmer, Gus Cress, Ed Ostermeier, Phillip Tieman, Otto Arnald, Ed Hartman, Robert Cress, Arthur Gritzmaker, Bruce Curry, Chris Kircher, J. Harvey Friesner, Carl Gatchell, Ray Russell, Cleo Whitlatch, Wm. Hellman, Ralph Navis, Edwin FASTER, Orville Blue, and Wm. Mueller. Veterans with fifty years of continuous membership recently received life-time memberships from the post.

After World War II, the membership reached a high of 115. Legion meetings were held at various places for years until 1958 when a Legion Home was purchased. It was on Commercial Street where the Community Building now is. This meeting place was open to all charitable organizations. In 1971, the Legion donated \$4,000.00 and the site for the Community Building to the town.

The Legion supports many worthy programs. The post is especially interested in the hospitalized war veteran and the Illinois Soldiers and Sailors Children's Home at Normal.

Many community projects are supported by Legion Post 289. The ballpark, built by the Legion was turned over after its completion to Strasburg. The Little Boys' Softball League and the County Baseball League was started by the Legion. Post 289, along with Stewardson, supports the S-S American Legion Baseball team. Local Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts are sponsored by the Legion. Each year a boy is sent to Boy's State, and school medals are awarded to graduates. A yearly Halloween festival and a spring community sale are held. The Legion sponsors Liberty Amusements which owns

carnival rides, and this is a summer money-making project.

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American Legion Auxiliary Liberty Unit 289

The American Legion Auxiliary Liberty Unit 289 was organized in 1946 with thirty charter members, namely: Mamie Hirtzel, Mamie Rosine, Maurine Kull, Goldie Nippe, Ethel Harmon, Virginia Griffith, Marjorie Green, Audrey Falk, Anna Wirth, Lillian Wittenberg, Cora Ostermeier, Lizzie Giertz, Mable Schmitt, Pauline Tate, Aurora Kull, Pat Kull, Opal Keller, Frieda Daniels, Noberta Renshaw, Louise Kircher, Mabel Weber, Marjorie Tate, Ruth Meeker, Cora Von Behren, Lena Wilson, Fay Eileen Storm, Rose Storm, Helen York, Myrtle Ulmer, and Vera Ulmer. First president was Lena Wilson.

The American Legion Auxiliary was formed to aid the American Legion in their program of peacetime service to America. There are twenty-three different programs the Auxiliary takes part in. Of special interest is the rehabilitation, at Danville, of the disabled veteran, and Illinois Soldiers' and Sailors' Children's Home at Normal, which provides for the welfare of children who have no homes. The unit yearly sends a high school girl to Girls' State, sponsors poppy sales, donates to a foreign country, conducts the Americanism essay contest, and collects coupons for equipment.

Presently there are forty-six senior members and twenty junior members. Charter members who have held continuous membership are: Lena Wilson, Mabel Schmitt, Cora Ostermeier, Mamie Rosine, Cora Von Behren, Louise Kircher, Mamie Hirtzel, Myrtle Ulmer, Mabel Weber, Ruth Meeker, Noberta Renshaw, and Aurora Kull. Gold Star mothers are Lena Wilson and Louise Gillins.

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Scouting

Although scouting was introduced to the United States in 1910, it was another fifty years before Strasburg had a Boy Scout troop. Church fathers, who had been opposed to scouting for religious reasons, approved the organization, and in 1960, a troop was formed with Ray Price as Scout Master. Not only was Ray a good and willing worker with boys, but he was the only man in town who had been in Boy Scouts (in Shelbyville), and the by-laws stated that an ex-Scout must be Scout Master. American Legion Post 289 sponsored the organization. Later the same year three Cub Scout Dens were formed with Earl Renshaw as Cub Master. Den Mothers were Elaine Merriman, Noberta Renshaw, and Kathleen Thomas; Norma Rose Crutcher was assistant. Later Paul Thomas, Linel Thomas, Derry York and Delbert Stremming were Scout Masters. In addition to the traditional Scout activities, these local boys learned to swim, build houses for vanishing bluebirds, take field trips, and help in various community activities.

Gradually the members of these original dens and packs outgrew the organization and passed the age of seventeen, so the project was temporarily dropped.

In 1972 Cub Scout Pack 142 was reorganized

with thirty boys joining from Strasburg, Stewardson and Mode. Adult leaders were: Joyce Bowers, Evelyn Augenstein, Marjorie Fluga, Ada Foreman, Lynda Mason, Shirley Stremming, Joan Gallagher, and Dave Durbin. This group of boys was just as active as the first. They have marched in the Memorial Day parade, attended Akela Days at

Camp Robert Faries in Decatur, and enjoyed the Ice Capades at Champaign.

Presently there are ten boys in the Cub Scouts. Weekly meetings are held on Thursdays after school. Pack meetings are held monthly at the Community Building. Adult leaders now are Evelyn Augenstein, Janet DePriest, and Dave Durbin.



Fire Department

Citizens in Strasburg, realizing the need for a city fire department, organized the Strasburg Volunteer Fire Department in August, 1912. The first members were: Dr. F. W. Risser, J. E. Weber, A. C. Duling, Chester Marsh, J. C. Klump, Louis Weber. Wm. Wilson, Henry Faster Jr., C. C. Beck, and Wm. W. Engel. Martin Hamm was first fire chief, and, H. M. York served as assistant. This group donned fireman hats and long black slicker raincoats when called to duty. Between fires, pumping out wells and cleaning tiles was a regular activity.

The bucket brigade, formed in 1895, was soon made obsolete by the hand pump, which was operated by four men like a railroad handcar. This was usually pulled to fires by hand in town, but it could be hooked to a team or an auto. Later a pump with a gasoline motor was used. This again was generally transported by the men. At this time, the department also owned a ladder wagon and a two wheeled hose cart.

Fires were fought with the hand pump until 1923 when a Model T 1923 Ford truck equipped with a three cylinder piston pump was purchased and used.

In 1953 the present International truck with modern pumper and 850 gallon water capacity was bought. At the same time a drive was organized

to include the farmers in the fire protection area. This met with good response. Farmers may become members for a fee of twenty-five dollars per set of buildings and ten cents per acre of ground. \$100.00 is charged for a fire call, and is usually taken care of by the insurance company, if insured.

A Ford truck equipped with a 1,000 gallon water tank and pumper was purchased in 1966 to fight field and grass fires.

The present fire department is a member of the Old National Trail Firefighters Assn. and consists of twenty-five members. Officers are: Robert Falk, Fire chief; Donald Webner, assistant chief; Elmer Staehli, president; Gene Stremming, vice president; Floyd Weber, secretary; Guy Juhnke, treasurer. Two secretaries have served the organization: Henry Faster Jr. 1912-1944, and Floyd Weber 1945 - .

The fire house was built in 1914. The original fire bell is still in the building. The electric fire siren on a forty-five foot tower was installed in 1925.

To report a fire now, the phone number 4-3121 is dialed, and this rings the fire phones in fifteen homes in Strasburg and the volunteer firemen respond.



1923 Ford fire truck.



Water Department

Water was never too plentiful in the Strasburg area, and residents had to rely on a supply from shallow wells and cisterns on their own property. Even in the early days it was not uncommon for these wells to go dry during the summer months. When homes became modernized, more water than ever was needed, and many house-holders made a regular practice of buying water and having it hauled in to their wells. Especially during the extremely dry years of 1954-55, the water shortage became more acute, and efforts were made to secure a water system to serve the community.

The first step was to find a suitable source of supply that would be adequate and meet certain standards of quality. For more than twenty years, test wells were dug at various promising locations, but none could produce the amount needed. Finally four and one half miles southeast of town, a test revealed water enough to warrant digging a well.

The next step was financing the project. Application had been made to the Farmer's Home Administration for a forty-year loan of \$220,000 and was accepted provided the town could guarantee 175 users. The town officials worked hard at this, and got 201 subscribers who signed up for a minimum monthly payment of five dollars for 2000 gallons of water. Work started in September, 1965. The engineers were Marbray & Johnson of Robinson, Illinois, and the installing contractor was Henry Holkenbrink of Effingham. Elaborate dedication ceremonies took place on Friday, February 18, 1966, and the water was turned on the next day. The Village officials at this time were: Harrison Ulmer, Pres.; Paul Juhnke, Clarence Buesking, W. O. Keller, Elmer Staehli, Wm. R. Engel, and Floyd Weber. Trustees: Don Keller, Clerk. Donald Webner was the former village mayor during the time when much of the preliminary work and planning were being done.

The system has a 50,000 gallon tank on an elevated tower located in the northwest part of town, on land donated to the village for that purpose by the Walters sisters. The plant itself is located south-east of town on a tract leased from Irvin Figgins. The plant consists of a 65 foot well, pumps, and a purifying system. These are enclosed in a concrete block structure. The whole operation is radio controlled to maintain the required pressure at all times.

A chlorinator has been used since the beginning to provide chloride treatment of the water, and flouridation was installed in May, 1968, to comply with state regulations. This increased the cost to users to a \$5.50 monthly minimum charge. Water samples are taken monthly and mailed to the state for testing to insure the purity of the water.

There are at present 205 metered customers using an average of 35,000 gallons daily. Area farmers also benefit by being able to obtain water from the Water Salesman located in town at the firehouse, where water can be obtained day or night the year round from a metered dispenser. An average of 40,000 gallons of water is bought and taken out by individuals each month.

Floyd E. Weber has been superintendent and operator of the plant, and also serves as treasurer. Velma C. Weber serves as bookkeeper.

The water system also serves some homes located along or near the main line and provides water at St. Paul's Church and School and Unit 5A. Thirty-one fire hydrants provide ample protection from fires, whereas the fire truck formerly had to rely on water from the town wells, which sometimes proved inadequate. A new laundromat and car wash have been erected, and builders of new homes no longer have to meet the expense of digging a well of their own before starting to build. The water system has brought many benefits to the town and community.



Strasburg Today

Dale York, proprietor of York's Cafe, states that his brick building was built before 1900 by Martin Hamm, for use as a clothing store. Elmer York, Dale's father, and Bill Telgman hauled more than 100,000 bricks from Stewardson for the building.

Van Rheeden sold clothes here later, and in 1914 Elmer York bought the building. Here he managed a clothing store until about 1935. These businesses were all in the upstairs with the basement being used mainly for storage until 1930 when Elmer York started a restaurant below the store. He operated both businesses for awhile.

The basement was used from 1920 to 1926 by Dale's brother Gay, who sold auto parts, tires,

and batteries there. They pumped gas, and even Dale helped, although he was so young he used both hands to crank the gas pump.

In 1930 Elmer York built the "Green Lantern" onto the building's east side. Pop, sandwiches, ice cream, and candy were sold here during the summers by Aurora and Redith, daughters of Elmer. Dale removed this in 1946 because the structure made the cafe entrance confusing to the public.

Dale recalls working at this location, first part-time for his father, and then full time beginning in 1937. In 1941 Dale opened York's Cafe. Feeling that a small town in itself would not attract customers, he made excellent food the



Strasburg Today

Photo by: Ernie Newberry, Jr.

specialty of the house. The kitchen addition was constructed in 1946, and Dale now has five people working there on weekends and another five employed out front. During the week, fewer employees are needed.

Strasburg and York's are synonymous to people for miles around. Fanciers of fine foods have flocked to Dale York's for years.

In 1893, John N. Poe built the livery barn in downtown Strasburg. The building is mortise and tenon, and fastened with wooden pegs. This business changed hands many times. Louie Buesking ran the livery barn, as did George Gill. Owners include Bill Bauer, Pete Buesking, and Shorty Doehring.

The auto forced the close of this business around 1920.

This building remained empty for several years, used only for machinery storage. In 1935, G. B. Ulmer purchased the barn, and in 1947 the building was remodeled, and Wm. Juhnke with his sons, Paul and Guy, began the feed business here. Wm. V. Juhnke returned in 1967. Serving the area farmers, Paul and Guy Juhnke grind and mix feeds, handle bag and bulk feeds, and sell livestock supplies and seeds.

Since the restaurant in town has closed, Juhnke's have a coffee pot in their office, and many now enjoy a cup of coffee and the day's news at Juhnke's.

Theo. Alwardt farms two miles south and one mile east of Strasburg. In 1970 he became the Shell Oil Company truck salesman in our area. Now he represents the Sunoco Oil Company. Even though the Alwardts plan to move to Stewardson soon, Theo, will continue to serve our community.

The Standard Oil Company is represented in Strasburg by C. E. Buesking.

In 1920 a bulk plant was built in town and Howard Price was the first agent. In 1923 M. G. Ulmer took over full distribution for Standard Oil, and he operated the business until 1950. When Martin Ulmer returned, Clarence Buesking continued the service.

A 250 gallon delivery truck was used in 1920; through the years business has increased so that at the present, a 1500 gallon truck is used.

Strasburg is one of the best agricultural communities in the country, and the Standard Oil business is ever-growing here. C. E. Buesking currently serves an area of 200 square miles.

Derry York, owner of York Bin Company began his business in 1965 at the southwest edge of Strasburg. He started by selling Superior Grain Bins and various types of grain handling equipment. In two years he won the company award for sales, excellent service and installation.

In 1967 Derry changed to Butler Bins. Each year Derry's company has grown in size. Presently there are three warehouses and three offices, with additional employees and staff required each year.

Derry represents the central zone dealers at Butler Company meetings, and he serves on the twelve man Butler Agri-Council.

Derry's farm and York Bin Company were annexed into the Strasburg city limits in 1973.

Since 1947 Lawrence D. Biehler has owned and operated the Biehler Hatchery Company which dates back to 1911.

John Biehler, Lawrence's father, came to Strasburg around 1908. He lived in the Northeast part of town and here he had a few setting hens. Although he and Louie Figge owned a harness shop downtown for awhile, John Biehler soon got into the hatchery business.

At the present location, the first structures to be erected were the two white frame buildings. In 1936 the brick building was constructed, and this houses the office and incubator room. The feed building to the front was added in 1947.

Lawrence's wife Gail handles the office work at the hatchery. Since 1954 Dwight Lading has been employed as Biehler's right hand man.

In 1961 a poultry farm was purchased. Larry Black has lived on the farm since 1966. Here one day old chicks grow to twenty week pullets that sell as layers to other growers. Biehlers presently have five other poultry farms under contract.

The early business was largely to local farmers who nearly all raised poultry. In later years as eggs and broiler production specialized, the egg production was expanded. Now nearly all egg production is on a contract basis with the producer, pullet supplier, and feed supplier sharing income and expenses.

Glen Brandt and his son Frank hauled milk and ice cream for twenty-one years for Litchfield Dairy.

In 1964 Glen Brandt began dealing in grain. When he retired in 1970, Frank Brandt took over. Brandt's elevator is located two miles south of Strasburg. Grain is bought from local farmers and it is trucked to St. Louis, Wayne City, Decatur, or Springfield.

Besides dealing in grain and engaging in farming, the Brandt family now raise and show Appaloosa horses.

John Wittenberg and his wife Edith operate the Wittenberg Grain Company north of Strasburg.

John recalls that the business was started in 1945 when he purchased a used John Deere corn sheller. He shelled corn for neighboring farmers and trucked it to St. Louis. Bagged fertilizer was hauled back to the area. For twenty-five years, the Wittenbergs were thus engaged.

When bulk fertilizer became popular, John decided to drop the fertilizer part of the business and specialize only in grain handling. The new elevator was built on the farm in 1961. Wittenberg's is now the largest grain disposing company in central Illinois, buying from local farmers and hauling to market. Four truck drivers are employ-



Main Street—Strasburg 1973.

Strasburg Park.



Gail Biehler, Lawrence Biehler, and Dwight Lading at Biehler's Hatchery.

Pictured in a Youngscraft workshop are left to right: Dale and Emily Young, Dee Pieper, Jim Elam, Paul Juhnke, Larry Giertz; seated: Roger Schokley, Ronald Apke, and Ronald Greuel.



Strasburg State Bank employees: Roy Rincker, Linda Cress, Evelyn Augenstein, and Nita Vogel.



Kull Brothers, left to right: Loretta Kull, Carl Kull, Grace Kull, and Merl Kull.



Earl Renshaw and Larry Renshaw are shown in Renshaw's Superway.

Guy Juhnke and Paul Juhnke at the feed mill.



Dale York's Cafe.

ed, and John and Edith handle the office and elevator work.

John's son, John Jr., is in charge of the farming, but he also drives a truck and helps at the elevator when needed.

John Wittenberg has nothing but praise for the people in this area saying, "This community, in my estimation, cannot be beat."

* * * * *

In 1921 G. B. Ulmer started hatching chicks with a few small incubators. Soon he expanded and erected a building by his parents' home north of where W. R. Grace Company is now located. Several thousand chicks were hatched here weekly, and all were sent by parcel post to a wholesaler in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Ulmer's Hatchery was consumed by fire in 1925. All was lost — office equipment, records, and supplies, as well as 40,000 eggs that were in the process of incubation.

The business began again in a vacant building, formerly a blacksmith shop, at the east end of Commercial Street. In the fall, "Dub" purchased his present location and the hatchery was built here, now being operated by "Dub" and his wife, the former Alice Kull.

By this time nearly all the chicks were sold locally. A brooding capacity of several thousand was added.

A hobby of the Ulmer's had grown since 1950, and all enjoy their little roadside zoo of peafowl, pheasants, quail, geese, and "Mr. Hootie".

Ulmer's Hatchery has been operating under the same owners, longer than any other business now in Strasburg. For fifty-two years, "Dub" Ulmer has been in the hatchery business.

* * * * *

Dale Young, owner of Youngscraft Cabinets, began his business when he was eighteen years old. In the Abe Young building on the east end of Commercial Street, Dale made cabinets, repaired furniture, and did upholstery.

Dale's wife, the former Emily Mulvaney, has helped in the business since 1950. Dale served in the Korean War, and when he returned, he continued with cabinet making. In 1955 he was operating three workshops in town — in the Abe Young building, the Bill Hamm building, and in the former Green Garage. Seven or eight cabinet-makers were employed by this time.

Dale expanded and incorporated, but difficulties with faulty glue contributed to his company's bankruptcy in 1960. In just a short while, customers were again asking for cabinets crafted by Dale, and he resumed business.

In 1965, one of the town's worst fires destroyed Dale's main manufacturing plant. Dale purchased the former Weber store building, and this workshop remains the hub of Youngscraft Cabinets.

Dale recalls the first kitchen layout he designed. It was done for Martin Kull, and is still in the home now owned by Pete Buesking.

Formica was used exclusively by Youngscraft Cabinets beginning in 1963. Dale pioneered Formi-

ca. The first Formica cabinets in St. Louis were put in by Dale twenty-two years ago. Youngscraft Cabinets, distinctive in design, are used in fine homes and businesses throughout Illinois. The John Hancock Building in Chicago and the Kranert Art Center at the U. of I. are just two of the buildings which contain Youngscraft Cabinets. Designing and building kitchens, vanities, office furniture, and store fixtures is Dale's speciality.

Dale's business is ever-changing and expanding. He has recently ventured into a new line of manufacturing a patented vending machine for 8 track stereo tapes. Dale is president of the Sanibel Manufacturing Company, which will produce this vending machine for world-wide distribution.

* * * * *

The Bill Hamm building at the east end of Commercial Street mentioned by Dale Young and owned now by Dale was built by Harmon Dannenberg in 1907 for a restaurant. He married John Ebmeier's sister and he remained here in business until 1912 or 1913. James Wiandt's Jewelry Shop was in the east part of the building at one time. Charlie Miller had a saloon there, also. C. C. Beck's Grocery Store operated in this building for years until 1931. Other groceries there include Gaylord Ulmer's and Ray Price and Walter Kull's. The building was owned for years by Martin Hamm, later by Lauren Hamm. W. O. Keller purchased the building from the Hamm estate, and Dale Young acquired the structure from him.

* * * * *

Beauty shops in the Strasburg area are: The Beauty Box, formerly Max Weber's Insurance office, located in Strasburg's Commercial Street and operated by Joann Neimer; Clara's Beauty Shop operated by Clara Durbin in her home since 1969; and York's Beauty Salon, operated now by Debbie Thoele, in the Derry York residence.

Jerry Kessler purchased the John Radloff home on Route 32 in Strasburg. Here he opened Jerry's Barber Shop in 1971. Jerry is busy shaping hair, giving haircuts and shampoos.

* * * * *

Roger Rentfro bought Ivan Keller's building just east of Renshaw's, and began a Recreation Center in Strasburg in 1973. The center is open in the evenings and on Saturdays and Sundays. People of all ages may enjoy playing pool, ping-pong, or other games here, and snacks are available.

Roger also has established a television and stereo repair shop in the rear of the building.

This building was built by J. J. Kull for a saloon. Others, including a Buell and Son, operated this saloon later. O. O. Kull remembers working in Chris Kircher's hardware and implement store here from 1925 until 1928. The equity moved into this structure then, and Orval managed this business, which he then bought in 1932. Orval purchased the building from the Kull estate. He operated the O. O. Kull Grocery there until 1955 when Ivan Keller purchased the establishment and opened Keller's Grocery.

* * * * *

Nippe's Garage, located in the west part of

Kull Brother's Hardware Building, is operated by Charles Nippe. He has done general repairs there since 1964 when the business was purchased from Emil Ulmer.

Vern Oliver was the first mechanic at this location. When O. A. Green had the garage, Shorty Lading handled the repair jobs. In 1940, Emil Ulmer and Curtis Ostermeier took over the shop. Harrison Ulmer also worked as mechanic with his father here for several years.

* * * * *

Falk's Repair Shop is owned by Robert Falk. Bob Specializes in farm machinery repair work. Farmers around Strasburg are fortunate to have an expert mechanic in town. He began his business in 1959, purchasing his shop at the east of Commercial Street from Wm. W. Engel and Sons.

Bob worked for Wm. W. Engel and Sons, John Deere Dealer, as a mechanic beginning in 1946, until Engel's went out of business in 1959.

The back room on his shop was built for an ice house where ice cut from local ponds was stored in sawdust for use during the next summer. At one time the front of the shop was used as a chicken dressing plant. Bob relates a tale told by Art Unruh. Art said that there are three bottles of home brew on the bottom of a well under the floor. The bottles were tied on a string and were lowered into the well to cool them. The string broke.

* * * * *

Gene Kull began selling fertilizers and chemicals in Strasburg in 1966. Grace Greentown is located on the G. B. Ulmer property two blocks south of the ball park.

Gene supplies area farmers and is especially busy during farming season. Gene employs Charles Culver, and in rushed times, his father Rufus Kull helps.

* * * * *

Don Keller of Strasburg began in November, 1952, as Insurance Agent for Country Companies. Don works out of the office in the Farm Bureau Building in Shelbyville. He also has an office in his home in the west part of town.

Don sells all types of insurance, including life, casualty, fire and marine insurance, and handles an investment plan.

* * * * *

Kull Brothers' Hardware Store is owned by Merle and Carl Kull. They began their business in 1946.

The store building on Route 32, was originally built by George E. Kull and "Sep" Swigart for automobile sales and service. Green's Dodge-Plymouth Garage was later in this building.

Carl Kull served in World War II. He and Merle purchased the building, and when Carl returned from service, they went to Danville to buy hardware supplies to stock the store.

Electricity came into the Strasburg area in 1941-42, but the war halted this work until 1946. When Kull Brothers began their business, they did lots of REA wiring in the community. The first appliance line they handled was Frigidaire. As

homes were wired, waiting lists formed for refrigerators and other appliances.

At first Kulls also sold gasoline and oil and had a grease rack in the rear of the store. They were dealers for Kaiser-Frazer autos. After the auto agency was dropped, the brothers expanded their wiring and plumbing work, and stocked more hardware and different lines of home appliances.

This is a family store, with Carl taking charge of selling, Merle repairing and installing, and their wives, Loretta and Grace, minding the store. Other family members help as needed.

For several years, Kull Brothers has been the only home and appliance store in Strasburg.

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Burgess Studios, owned by Carroll Burgess of Strasburg, was begun in March, 1973, in his home. The building on Commercial Street owned by W. O. Keller since 1951 was purchased, remodeled, and serves as office for the Burgess photography business. Studio portraits are taken here.

Carroll Burgess spends most of his time on the road photographing in stores throughout Illinois and into Missouri and Indiana.

The building Carroll Burgess purchased was built in 1900 by Mary and Mattie Richards for a hat shop. Mary had the hat shop in the front, and Mattie did sewing in two rooms to the rear. A living room and two small bedrooms above the shop were where the Richards sisters lived. Later Myrtle Beck had a hat shop here.

Owners listed on the abstract include Wm. Engel in 1910, Martin Hamm, H. H. Buesking, Ben Kull, John Anderson and George Lloyd in 1946, Martin Kull, and W. O. Keller.

This building has been a butcher shop at one time; Dean and Ida Kearney ran a grocery store here once; and once it was a pool hall.

Many have lived in the upstairs apartment of this structure.

* * * * *

Ralph Crutcher owns Crutcher Sales and Service, handling lawn and garden power equipment.

Ralph began in 1954 in the D-X Service Station at Route 32 and Commercial Street. In 1961, he purchased the former O. A. Green Garage north on Route 32, for a Shell Service Station. In 1962, Ralph began handling lawn mowers and became a Simplicity dealer in 1966.

Although he discontinued his auto service and sold his business property in 1973, Ralph remains in the lawn and garden equipment business at his home.

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In 1966 a lot on Commercial Street was purchased from the Engel Estate by Nathan Wascher, Dr. Peter Kollinger, Richard Mietzner, and Ralph Mietzner, and the building for the K.W.I.K. Wash Laundry was erected. This coin operated laundry and car wash has been owned by Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Mietzner since 1969.

* * * * *

Burl Hobson opened Hobson Garage at the east end of Commercial Street in 1946. He began

blacksmithing, welding, and repairing here. In 1963 a vehicle testing machine was installed. Farm and business trucks are tested here.

Hobson Garage was built by John Ebmeier and it was used first as a planing mill. In the middle 1920's, Bartlett's bought milk and made butter here. Later Paul Rincker used the building for a cream station and a poultry house.

* * * * *

The mill building still stands in Strasburg, and is now not a business as such, but is used only for grain storage by Bill Yakey of Stewardson. It is reported to be the oldest structure in Strasburg. It must have been erected in 1883.

Henry Bernhard's milling business in Shumway burned, and local citizens here, realizing the need for a mill, paid five thousand dollars and erected the Strasburg building. Bernhard established his business here. His son-in-law, August Metzler, later took charge. For a time people from all over the country came to Strasburg to get their grain ground into flour and meal. The business was lost before the depression, and the property sold at a bankruptcy sale in 1930. Floyd Yakey of Stewardson acquired the property, and August Kull managed the elevator until he retired in the 1950's. Donald Webner later leased the elevator.

* * * * *

Schlechte Lumber Company, located in the south part of Strasburg, was established in 1958 on property purchased from Rosetta Fling.

The company has increased in size from the original 60 x 100 foot of buildings to its present size of 150 x 300 foot of buildings. Due to ever increasing demands, these buildings have been expanded five different times. A complete line of building materials, hardware, DuPont paint, and plumbing supplies is currently carried.

For several years, Lloyd Schlechte and his sons, Warren and George, built homes and did carpentering. Now George has taken over this work, while his father handles the lumber yard business with the help of two employees, Bryan Renshaw and Roscoe Hash. Warren is now a contractor working in the Effingham area.

Many homes and other buildings have been constructed throughout the Strasburg area by the Schlechtes.

Schlechte Lumber Company continues to provide the Strasburg community with the best materials and considerate service. Lloyd Schlechte welcomes all customers, saying, "We are here to serve you and our community."

* * * * *

Donald Webner of Webner's Truck Service and Webner's Elevator remembers trucking first in 1927. His first truck was a '28 Chevrolet. He hauled livestock from the Strasburg community to East St. Louis and brought back feed, fertilizer, and roofing. This trip to the stockyards took nine hours and twenty minutes in those days. Now it's a two hour trip to truck to East St. Louis. Webner's presently have three semi-trucks, a straight truck, a lime truck, and nine trailers.

In 1951 Donald leased Yakey's Elevator. He re-

calls that during the 1960 wheat harvest, the entire east side went out of the building. No one was injured. People came to help from all over with scoop shovels, augers, and trucks, and in no time the disaster was cleaned up.

Webner's present business site was developed in 1967 after land was purchased from Martin and Myrtle Ulmer.

* * * * *

The Pfeiffer Lumber Company is north of Commercial Street in Strasburg. The lots the lumber yard are on are part of the original town laid out in 1874.

It is said that a Renner was one of the first in this lumber yard, followed by a G. W. Logan. Records show that in 1903, J. C. Pfeiffer purchased the business from Wm. W. Engel. Martin Pfeiffer later bought his father out and he remained in the lumber yard until his death. His son, John C. Pfeiffer, Jr., cares for the lumber yard now and handles lumber and building supplies, paints, and fencing.

* * * * *

Gerald Sporleder purchased the service station building on the corner of the main street in Strasburg from Mrs. Herman Noffke. In 1972 he opened up the service station here which is now Strasburg Sunoco.

Herman Noffke built the service station in 1953, where Dr. Schroeder's office had once been. Vincent Noffke, Ralph Crutcher, the Nippe Brothers, Lloyd and Fred Durbin, and Kenneth Noffke all have been in business here.

* * * * *

The East Tavern on Commercial Street stands empty at the present. In 1947 the frame tavern building at that location burned, but was soon rebuilt by John Anderson and George Lloyd. Owners since the block building was erected have been: Anderson and Alanbaugh, Martin Kull, Dell Martin, Bob Merriman, Harold Nippe, and Art Nippe. The property remains a part of the Goldie Nippe Estate.

* * * * *

The garage building south of Dale York's Cafe stands empty now. This structure was built in 1926 by Gay York just before the slab construction was begun. This was the Ford Garage in Strasburg for years. Gay remained in business here until his death in 1960. For twenty-three years Emil Ulmer was mechanic for Yorks. The building remains under the York family ownership.

* * * * *

Renshaw's Superway is located in the brick building at the west end of Commercial Street. The Big Four—J. C. Pfeiffer, Bert Harves, John Bauer, and J. J. Kull—erected this building to handle general merchandise. Everything from machinery to groceries, from fabrics to hardware, was sold here.

Earl Renshaw began his business in Strasburg in December, 1946, when he returned from serving in World War II. He purchased Art Culver's store, which was located where the Community Building is now. Earl recalls that at this time Strasburg had

a thriving business district with three car agencies, four taverns, two hardware stores, a doctor, a nursing home, two restaurants, and five groceries.

The following July Weber Brothers wanted to sell their business, and Earl formed a partnership with Henry Myers to purchase the store. Renshaw and Myers were in business until Henry Myer sold out to Earl and returned to college. In 1957, Martin Weber's store and building was purchased by Earl, and Renshaw's moved into the present location.

Earl remembers that years ago the store was open on Saturday night. Sometimes as many as nine hundred dozen eggs would be bought from local farmers on a Saturday night. Cream was also purchased and tested in the back room.

Free movies brought crowds to town, and often during intermission, a hundred ice cream cones were dipped up.

Renshaw's operated branch stores in both Stewardson and Windsor at one time.

The present-day store is a modern air-conditioned building, specializing in groceries and meat. A wide range of ready to wear basics and sewing needs are carried. Sundries, baby clothing, shoes, and gifts are also sold.

The north end garage building was erected in 1947 by O. A. Green and his son, Lowell. Boone Martin laid the brick with help from Ott Nippe, Joe Rawlings, and Martin Mueller. After World War II until 1950, the Green's sold Kaiser-Frazer autos here. Then they had the Dodge-Plymouth agency. Lowell was with his father in business until 1957, when he became postmaster.

Bitzer-Taggart of Shelbyville was in business in this garage, and later Dale Young used it for a workshop.

In 1961, Ralph Crutcher purchased the garage for a Shell Service Station.

Jim Wittenberg owns the building now, and

this is his truck service station. Jim hauls grain locally, and trucks produce over a twenty state area. He has three tractors and five trailers. Two others help him drive.

Leverett Buesking trucked for Joe Young and Orty Webner previous to 1939, when he went into business for himself. Farmers would contact him, and he would haul livestock to packing plants. Leverett trucks now throughout the middle west, hauling livestock and feed. He owns two power units and four trailers.

Both Darrell Cress and Bill Walker own their own tractors, and they lease to CBW Transport Service of South Roxana, Illinois.

Ronald Newcomb owns three tractors and leases to John David Trucking Company of Effingham.

Tobe Kircher, north of Strasburg, does general hauling with his four semi-trucks.

The G. and J. Construction Company of Strasburg is owned by George Schlechte and Jim Bales.

George Schlechte has done carpentering since he graduated from high school in 1951. In 1969 he and Jim formed a partnership and they expanded the business. Five other craftsmen, beside the owners, are on the G. and J. payroll presently. The company specializes in construction of homes and in remodeling.

Construction is done by the G. and J. Construction Company throughout the area, from Sullivan to Effingham.

Rudolph Kull of Strasburg is the insurance agent for Pana-Hillsboro Company in the community. This business has been handled by the same family for over forty years.

The One Day Coal Mine

Bert Wiandt related the story of the short-lived coal mining industry in Strasburg. The town tested for coal and water when Bert was a small boy during the 1880's. An Artesian well was dug near where the fire house is presently located. Drilling there revealed the presence of coal—in fact, a vein estimated to be five feet thick.

In 1888 local men drilled in different sites around the village, and a mine was dug east of the former Strasburg High School, on ground known for years as the Engel ground, now owned by George Schlechte. When the coal was reached, it

was only six inches thick on one side and seventeen inches thick on the other. Bert called the Strasburg vein a "horseback"—thick only in one place and otherwise too thin to be profitable. Salt water filled the mine shaft within twenty-four hours, floating tools to the top, and the discouraged drill crew quit. The mine shaft walls were boarded up with bridge timber and about 1928, Gay York, local Ford dealer, dumped old cars in it. As it grew over, the abandoned mine shaft looked safe, but it remained a dangerous attraction to area children until 1970 when the shaft was filled.

Can We Forget?

Saturday night free movies?
Homecoming barbecues?
The church bell tolling a death announcement?
Ida Ruwe's "BURG" at Central Office?
The Memorial Board of service men?
"Pressing the bricks" on Thursday band concert nights?
Class plays held above local businesses?
St. Paul's German picnics?
The brick sidewalks?
The noon whistle?
Bill Wilson punching the clock on his beat?
Light poles in the middle of main street?
The OUTSIDE gym?
Homecoming down main street?

Balloon ascensions?
Eavesdropping on party lines?
Rummy marathons in the East Tavern?
The town pumps?
No phone calls after 9 p.m.?
Cutouts on the Model T's?
John Klump lighting the street lamps?
The stores open til midnight on Saturday nights?
Pie and box suppers?
Ice skating on Henne's Pond?
Jacking the car up for the winter?
Making a meal on 10¢ cheese and 5¢ crackers?
Backing up steep hills in the Model T's?
The annual Christmas tree in the center intersection of town?

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## Centennial Farms

Many area farms have been in the same family for over a century. Owners of the following ones have applied and received emblems presented by the Charleston Production Credit Association and the Illinois Department of Agriculture.

Eighty acres, two miles south of Strasburg, belonging to Charles and Mildred Nippe was first purchased by Henry Figge, Charles' great-grandfather, who came here from the St. Louis area. The family farm was then Charlie Figge's; and later Mrs. Joe Nippe's.

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Donald and Melba Ruff reside now on the farm owned originally by John Ruff, Donald's grandfather. Louis Ruff later lived on the homeplace.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Brehmer farm south of Strasburg on Route 32, was first purchased from the Illinois Central by Carl Brehmer. Wm. J. Brehmer, his son, later lived on the farm, and now Wm. Brehmer, his grandson, resides here.

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The Russell farm by Lower Ash Church, east of Strasburg, was first farmed by Hiram Russell, who came from Indiana. His son, Noah Russell, later resided here, and then Morris Russell, his grandson. Ferne Russell lived on the homeplace until recently.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Ulmer farm was homesteaded by Andrew and Sophia Ulmer. The youngest of their sixteen children, Martin, took over the farm. He is survived by his wife Mary who still lives on this farm northeast of Strasburg.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Wm. Pikesch, Jr. family still farms and

lives on the land once owned by his father, Wm. Pikesch, his aunt, Anna Pikesch, and his grandfather, John Pikesch.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Duncan farm, three miles north of Strasburg, was acquired in 1838 and 1843 by James Duncan. The homeplace was owned later by Thomas Duncan, then Edward Duncan, and now Edward's wife, Ethel Duncan. The thirty acre plot was owned by James A. and Hannah Duncan, then Edward, and at the present, owners are Ethel Duncan and George and Gretchen Schumacher, who is a great grand-daughter of the original owner.

\*\*\*\*\*

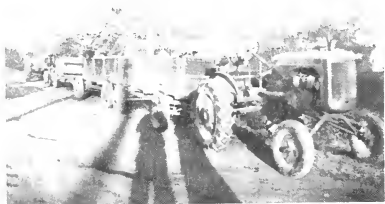
Glen and Fern L. Brandt are owners of three centennial farms. One is north of St. Paul's Cemetery, and was owned by the Altags, and later Minnie and Rudolph Von Behren, grandparents and parents of Fern. The farm east of Strasburg was owned by Wm. Von Behren, then his children, and now Glen and Fern L. Brandt. Frankie Brandt now lives where Carl J. Juhnke first lived. Later Minnie Von Behren owned this farm.

\*\*\*\*\*

The farm north of Strasburg, where Elmer Richards has lived since 1939, was first purchased by his great-grandfather, James Duncan in 1838. Ruth Leathers, a daughter of James, had the property in 1865, and then it was out of the family for a brief period. Sam Duncan, Elmer's grandfather, obtained the land in 1874; then in 1935, Mary Elizabeth Richards and Ida Compton were owners. Ida deeded it to M. E. Richards that same year. In 1950, Simon Richards, Elmer's brother, was the landowner, and since 1960 it has belonged to Elmer.

\*\*\*\*\*

Other area farms that have been in the same family for over a century include that of Garl Figgins, the Martin Vogel Estate, Otto Lading's, Gene Telgman, Ervin Lenz, Robert Stremming, Ed Lenz, and Oma Foelsing.



Sawing the winter's supply of wood.

Left: Loads of soy beans awaiting their turn to be unloaded at the elevator, October 1944.

J. J. Spannagel binding grain — 1917.



Farm mower pulled by mule team.



A barn raising. Walls were assembled on the ground and raised into place with long poles.



Old steam engine running a grain separator before combines were in use.

Right: Early pick-up baler on Ervin Reel farm 1930. Below: Clyde Reel on one of the first combines used in the community in 1930.



# Historic Homes

The home of Lena Weber on the main street of Strasburg is in the original town plot laid out by Charles Ostermeier in January, 1874. Mr. Ostermeier owned the house, and later it sold to C. Doehring. The property changed hands several times. According to the abstract, it was once owned by the Crawfordsville Casket Co. Once the house was used as a millinery shop by the Beck sisters, Myrtle and Effie. J. E. Weber purchased the house in 1898.

Many remember the huge maple tree that stood near this home until the last few years. It was one of the original row of trees set out in the early history of Strasburg along the north side of Commercial Street.

\* \* \* \* \*

In March of 1874, Charles Ostermeier built the home where Ed Ostermeier and his wife now reside. It has changed titles many times, and in 1958 the Ed Ostermeiers bought it from his brother Herman.

This house originally had four rooms—two down and two upstairs. When Herman Wangelein owned it, another room was added and grey weatherboard siding was put on.

This may be the oldest house in Strasburg.

\* \* \* \* \*

Paul Boyer's home in the southeast part of town was in the J. F. Kull Sub-Division. It had belonged to Henry Faster.

Marie Boyer testified that her parents, the Alf Dulings, began housekeeping here in 1900. At that time, the house was very old. The south part of the home was the original section and consisted of two rooms, one up and one down, with an outside stairway on the north.

In 1913 Dulings moved out of the house for a time, so that two new rooms and the summer kitchen could be added to the structure. Jake Kull was the carpenter.

Paul and Marie Boyer moved in during 1939. They have remodeled once.

\* \* \* \* \*

James Bush now owns the Martin Hamm home reportedly built in 1892. The original house consisted of two rooms up and two down plus a kitchen and a small room for a hired girl. In 1908, the hall, stairway, two bedrooms and a parlor were added by Martin Hamm who owned the home until Kenneth York purchased the property in 1945. The house now was used for a tavern as well as a home. Max Prosser bought the property in 1951, and the Bob Pattersons owned it from 1963 until 1973.

The first cement sidewalks in Strasburg are said to be those in front of this house. It's reported that George Patterson mixed the cement by hand, and poured the walks.

\* \* \* \* \*

A. F. Van Rheeden, one of Strasburg's first citizens, had the home just west of York's Cafe

built around 1880. Last owners were Alvin and Belle Kearney. It is a lovely, spacious house featuring a curved stair case, and it is surrounded by lush landscaping. This was the Chris Kircher home for years until the 1930's, at which time Alvin Kearney purchased the property.

At the present the house stands empty, owned by Jim York.

\* \* \* \* \*

About two miles north of Strasburg on route 32 at the top of the hill is the home of Albert Doehring. The farm house is on the west side of route 32, and the farm buildings are on the east side of the pavement. The house reportedly was built by L. H. Turner about 1874.

The Herman Doehring's purchased the farm about 1902 from Tom Lading. After Herman Doehring passed away, his son Albert remained on the farm.

The home has changed little over the years. At one time it had green window shutters and a fancy railing above the porch.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Bill Faster home on route 32 is at the south edge of Strasburg. The east part of the house was the original one-room cabin made of four by four hand hewn logs.

This has been plastered over and added onto. No doubt this was one of the first homes in Strasburg, although no records can be located. In 1876 J. J. Kull owned the house and the forty acres it was on. He and his bride started housekeeping here, and the house was old at that time. Henry Faster lived in the home, and later his children William, Sophia, and Mary made this their home. The house was occupied until the 1960's. John Wittenberg is the present property owner.

\* \* \* \* \*

One mile south of Strasburg on the Clarksburg Road live the Albert Muellers. This land was purchased in 1870 and 1871, and Albert's grandparents, the Frederick Luedkes, built the house on the property in 1874 or before. Albert lived here as a boy with his grandfather who remained on the farm until 1907. His brother William farmed here for a few years. The property was owned by Albert's mother. He moved on the farm in 1923, and still resides there.

Prairie grass still grows along the ditch, sometimes to a height of eight feet. Albert remembers that this ground used to be little more than swamp ground infested with snakes.

\* \* \* \* \*

One of the older houses in Strasburg now owned by Golda Ritchey is two blocks west of Kull Brothers. This house has had many owners. George Young owned it in 1900, and in the 1910's Henry Kircher made it his home. James Wiandt and his family occupied the house for several years. Lizzie Giertz lived here in the 1930's until about 1952. The Drake family bought the property in

1960, and in 1966 Proffits purchased it. Mrs. Ritchey became owner in 1973.

\*\*\*\*\*

The house that Carroll Burgess now owns is on lots that were originally part of a tract given by the United States Government to the state in 1850. The lots then became the property of the Illinois Central Railroad in 1852. The first individual owning the property was Colbin Seim. The lots passed through several hands until A. F. Van Rheeden acquired them in 1880's. Ada Mae Figgenbaum, grandmother of Zoe and Woodrow Wilson, became owner in 1889. Bill Wilson lived in this home for several years. The Wilson family owned the property until 1963 when Freddie Durbin bought

it. Durbins sold the home to Carroll Burgess in 1972.

\*\*\*\*\*

The brick house in the southwest part of town known commonly as the Figge House was built by J. J. Kull in 1896. J. J. Kull lived here until his death in 1927, and then his widow remained. She died a few years later, and Pete and Sarah Buesking (daughter of J. J.) lived in the home until the middle 1930's. At this time the property was purchased by Louie Figge, local harness maker. This was the Figge home until 1964. From the Figge estate, the home sold to Omer Thomas. Richard Holbrook, next owner, sold to Paul Pieper who owns the property now.

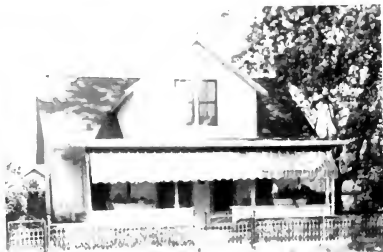


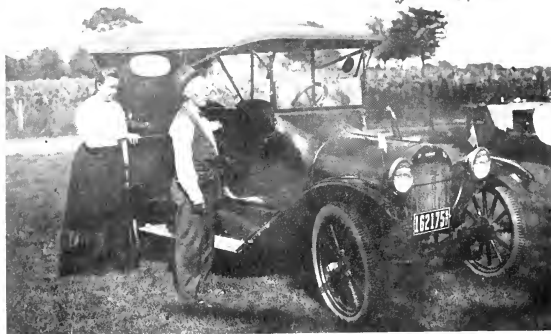
The Ed and Cora Ostermeier home.

Lena Weber's home.



Albert Mueller residence.





Mr. and Mrs. Fred (Fritzie) Brehmer with their 1917 Chevrolet.

## Movin' On



J. E. Weber in touring car.



Florence Spannagel, Fern (Spannagel) Reed, Edward Spannagel and Orville Klump in 1917.



Max and Floyd Weber prepare to deliver in their 1926 Ford truck.



Seven young ladies take a spin in what is thought to be the first Strasburg-owned car. Back row: Rosa Ruff, Mary Terry, Leah Spannagel. Front row: Mary Meyer, Cora Ruff, Mrs. Latimer (seated in front) with Alma Bauer at the wheel.



Road Oiler improves streets in Strasburg.



"Better Get a Horse"—Martin Buesking and Martin Von Behren drive down Commercial in front of the Strasburg House.

# Cameos

## JAMES WIANDT

James Wiandt saw the village of Strasburg grow from a handful of stores on the prairie to a flourishing town.

Merchant, jeweler, druggist, and postmaster – James Wiandt was all of these. Primarily, however, he was a craftsman who through the years mended clocks, watches, locks, and hinges, did wagon work, made keys, Jews' harps, reeds for wind instruments, fashioned pocket knives, made cowbells, and created violins.

Violins made by Wiandt were noted for their sweet tones. His favorite woods to use were cherry and maple. His violins usually sold for under \$100.00. When asked how he learned to make violins, it's said that he replied, "I just took it up."

James Wiandt built the first jail in Strasburg, put down the first sidewalk, and dug the first city well.

He came to Strasburg as a boy of sixteen lured by the good farming ground. Here he lived until his death in 1939. He is buried in Gaskill Cemetery.



James Wiandt

## THE WALTER GIRLS

Emma and Lizzie Walters lived in Strasburg for years, and they supplied the entire community with fruits, vegetables, milk, butter, eggs, and chickens. The Walters girls had a large garden and a truck patch. Hops grew on the garden fence, and the sisters made yeast, which many people in town used. From their hotbed by the house, Emma and Lizzie sold celery plants, tomatoes, peppers and cabbage plant.

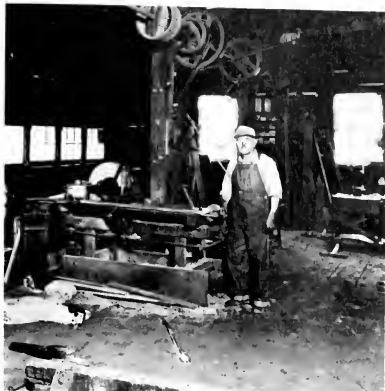
The seamstress was Emma, who sewed for all of Strasburg. Customers even traveled from Shelbyville to be fitted. Many brides walked down the church aisle wearing a gown by Emma. There were no commercial patterns to use, and the Walter girls were experts at cutting their own. For twenty-five cents, they would make a pattern for local seamstresses to use. Lizzie did most of the outside work, and Emma sewed.

Emma clerked and tested cream for Dick Storm in his store, and later she worked for Martin Weber in his business. At one time she helped at York's Cafe. She served the village as treasurer from 1945 to 1957.

Lizzie passed away in 1960, and Emma's wish to die alone at home was fulfilled in 1962 when she was found by neighbors.



Walters Girls



Alf Duling

Marvin Ulmer recalls from his boyhood days in town: "A fascinating place on Strasburg's main street in the early 1900's was the blacksmith shop. It was presided over by "Binky" Duling. He was only about 5' 5" tall, but he had the biggest biceps in town. The big activity here was the shoeing of horses, banging the red hot plow shares, and putting a large rim of steel on the wheels of the box wagons. It was quite a sight to see "Binky" bounce that big hammer on a red hot plow share and wonder why the place didn't catch on fire when the hot sparks fell on the floor.

Most interesting of all was "Binky" himself. He drove a 1918 Dort. In fair weather it was open, and when it rained he put on the side curtains. This little man with the big muscles liked music and had played in the Strasburg Band and was on the school board." (Duling Gym was named for Alf Duling, who was instrumental in getting the gymnasium.)

Marvin ends by writing: "Binky" Duling was my friend when I was little because he always had time to talk to me. He answered all questions — relevant and irrelevant. He was quite a fellow!"

## BERTHA YORK

When Bertha Hoesé came to Strasburg the lives of hundreds were destined to be changed. A tall, lively girl with sparkling brown eyes she assumed charge of the lower grades in Strasburg Public School and taught them, not with the rod, but with love and patience. This was her teaching credo throughout her long teaching career.

Romance came to Bertha with her introduction to a young barber, Harry York, and the courtship developed into marriage. This was in the days when the woman's place was in the home, and Bertha left her beloved schoolroom to become a wife and mother.

In 1924, however, the clang of the school bell and the smell of chalk dust could no longer be resisted and Bertha was back, her kind but firm personality pervading the lower grades.

Children in Mrs. York's room were taught not only the fundamental readin', writin' and 'rithmetic, but were instilled with a philosophy of living to serve them throughout life. She believed in the simple things — faith, love, charity, and above all, the beauty of the things around her. She was once heard to remark, "I see beauty in all things. Even the sight of freshly washed clothing flapping in the breeze is a thing of beauty."

She returned in 1941 after twenty-five years of teaching in Shelby County.



Bertha York

## WILLARD RICHARDS

Have an old shed to move? Need a load of coal or concrete blocks—sand or rock? Want your junk hauled away?

Until his untimely death in 1963 at the age of fifty-three, Willard Richards was always available for such jobs. He had a wench truck and a truck for hauling. Anything that had to be hauled he'd haul. Loving a challenge, if anyone said a job couldn't be done, Willard would do it.

Born and raised west of Strasburg where Max Prosser now lives, Willard and his father lived on that farm all of their lives.

In World War II, Willard served in the Philippines and New Guinea, and he traveled extensively whenever he had the opportunity. An independent thinker, even in the army, Willard refused rank many times, and was discharged as private first class. Although he tried to hide his talents, his superiors eventually discovered that he was an expert driver, and he drove an army truck and also an officer's jeep. Willard refused his overseas pay when discharged, saying that if the government would leave him alone, he'd leave them alone.

Clamping his cigar stub in his mouth, Willard dispensed his philosophy along with his hauling. He never believed in paying income tax. If he was making too much profit during the year, jobs were done near the end of the year for little or nothing.

The waste in the army bothered him, and his goal was to buy an LST transport truck, go back to the Philippines, and salvage equipment buried and left there.



Willard Richards

## WILLIAM FASTER

If you had a clock that didn't run or needed oiling, a saw that was dull, or a camera that was giving trouble, you had only to take it to Bill and tell him all your troubles. In his earlier days he worked in the bank but later became postmaster. While at this job, he always delivered the special delivery letters with all haste. His window was always open, and he was the friend and confidante of every high school kid. In spite of the "No loitering" sign in the lobby, much time was spent by students in pouring out their woes to Bill, and he would try his best to come up with a remedy.

After he was out of the post office, he opened up his Fixit Shop at his home, where people came from great distances and brought their articles to be mended. Bill, a bachelor, lived with his two unmarried sisters in their parental home on the south edge of Strasburg. This house is one of the oldest buildings still standing in town, and part is the original log house. After his sisters died, he went to live with his nephew Bob in Kansas City, and took an active interest in the happenings of that city. When Bob moved to Mattoon, he also made his home there. But Bill missed being able to walk up to Main Street and chat with old friends and cronies. He loved to talk, and could spin yarn upon yarn about the old town when it was almost new, and could tell many colorful stories of the people who are now gone. If Bill were still with us, I'm sure that this book would be a lot easier to write.



William FASTER



Walter Andes

Walt was probably about as well known as anyone in the Strasburg vicinity, if not by sight, at least his voice could be recognized. He was the local telephone operator, taking over that job after his father died. He was also the repair man and could be seen almost anywhere fixing a line or pole that was broken or worn out. He lived with his mother, but his home was actually in the telephone office. Since he was on call for emergency telephone service all night, he had his bed close to the switchboard. In his earlier days he worked at various jobs, one of them being a helper to Boone Martin, who did masonry work. Walt loved to tell about one job where he and Boone were repairing the plaster in the ceiling of a home. They jokingly told the lady that the ceiling was guaranteed to stay up until they got out of the house. Sure enough, just as they got out of the door, the whole new plastering came crashing down!

### RISSEY GIRLS

The two sisters, Etta and Rosa, were daughters of Dr. and Mrs. Risser and were born in the frame building which served as home and office for the doctor. As a girl, Etta liked to accompany her father in his rounds of sick calls, and began to give what aid she could to the patients. Etta worked as assistant in the post office and took a great interest in photography. When their mother died, the two girls kept house for their father, and the three of them took their motherless nephew and grandson into their home.

The sisters were always ready for an outing or picnic, whether it was in their back yard, in the nearby woods, or some far-off scenic place. Planning parties was a great delight to them, and they entertained a host of friends. At Christmas time, their house was always the first one decorated, and it gleamed from top to bottom, adding glamour to the many holiday festivities for which they were famous. Both loved to walk, and Etta especially could easily cover more than a dozen miles at a time.

After Dr. Risser died, the sisters kept the household going, and also remodeled the house so that it could be operated as a convalescent home and a home for elderly and disabled people. Rosa did most of the cooking, and Etta was the chief nurse. They took great pains to keep up the morale of the patients. One elderly grandmother they always dolled up with ribbons when she was having company, and for a helpless man, they saw to it that the radio was nearby and tuned to his favorite ball game, Etta would make bets with him on the outcome of the games, and could read in his eyes his pleasure or disapproval of the proceedings. The Rissey girls continued in this work until age began taking its toll.

In April, 1973, Rosa passed away, and Etta died only six weeks later.



Risser Girls

## ELAINE "BOOBY" MERRIMAN

Although she was christened Elaine Ulmer at birth, within a few days her father Gilbert had dubbed her with the nickname "Booby" and this affectionate term stuck throughout her life.

She spent her entire life in Strasburg, except for a year in California, while her husband was serving in the Korean War, and her interests encompassed the entire community.

If any neighbor was sick, Booby was one of the first to arrive with a tasty dish. She was a friend of the elderly and spent many hours in their company, bringing a ray of sunshine into their lives. Mother of two sons, she served her time as Den Mother, and her basement, was a gathering place for many after-the-game activities for both the youthful participants and their parents.

When Booby heard that Strasburg was going to celebrate its hundredth birthday, she plunged headlong into helping plan the activities. She held a party to raise funds, and donated all the profits to the Hundertjahrfest and started a gold embellished tablecloth featuring all the town's businesses. Her brown eyes sparkled with relish when she talked about her plans for 1974.

But 1974 was not to be for Booby. In the spring she underwent surgery and the diagnosis was cancer. Still she went on planning for the future which she knew she would not live to enjoy. Always an active church worker, she set an example for her fellowmen by maintaining her fortitude and faith in God. In the late summer Booby left us, but her spirit lives on.



Elaine (Booby) Merriman

## FRIEDA LADING

In Webster's dictionary, a secretary is defined as one employed to handle correspondence and manage routine and detail work for a superior. But, Mrs. Lading was much more than this.

Frieda Lading attended Brown's Business College in Decatur, and she did some secretarial work in Michigan. In 1948 she became secretary at the Strasburg school. She became unit secretary in 1952, and she served in the capacity until her retirement in 1971.

Efficient and courteous, she became very knowledgeable about school business and was indispensable around the school office. Faculty and students alike relied on her. School was her life, and she gave unselfishly of her time and energy.

As a mother of a grown family—a son and two daughters—Mrs. Lading anticipated retirement. She had grandchildren to enjoy, plus her rose bushes and her flower beds. Retirement was short for her, however, only a few months of leisure, a trip to Florida, and Mrs. Lading died unexpectedly after a brief illness.



Frieda Lading

# Law and Order in Strasburg

Strasburg was a typical pioneer town. To it, as to every town that was started in those days, came gamblers and rowdies. Fights and gunplay were sometimes indulged in, and the village enjoyed more local color than peace of mind. Law and order were in the person of a town marshal with a three foot club. He was often scoffed at, for culprits when pursued had the disconcerting practice of running, jumping over the fence (located on the west side of the route between where Kull Brothers and York's Cafe now stand) and, safe outside the city limits and the jurisdiction of its law, expressing in lurid terms their opinions of it. As the town grew, this element subsided and finally disappeared.

Marshals and night watchmen of the past recalled by local citizens include: A. A. (Raspberry) Beck, Jasper Curry, John Ebmeier who took his dog along when walking his beat, Jake Martin, Ben Bingaman, and Louie Knapp. Later "old John Klump" kept order, then Bill Wilson, A. V. (Slug) Unruh, and Red Keller. Presently, Donald

Webner is Strasburg's night watchman.

## THE 1930 ROBBERY

Five armed gunmen disturbed the peace in Strasburg in 1930, early one morning. The night watchman, Bill Wilson, was tied up and taken to the Orty Webner store which stood where Renshaw's parking lot now is. One bandit was left to stand and guard Wilson. The other four, it's reported, captured the bread truck driver who was delivering in town. Ralph Terry who drove for Orty Webner appeared on the scene to get a truck out, and the robbers promptly tied him up. All three captured by the gunmen were found about 6:30 a.m.

\$75.00 worth of merchandise was taken from M. R. Storm's store, and the post office was entered. Several items were also taken from Orty Webner's Hardware Store.

Later the gunmen were caught in the Decatur area.



## The Barber Shop Mirror

The mirror still in the former barber shop on Commercial Street was the basis of a feature newspaper article in March, 1951. At that time, the mirror reportedly was at least forty years old — which dates it to the year 1911. Businessmen in Strasburg around 1911 had ads at the top and bottom of the mirror. Since this gives a good idea of Strasburg businesses at that period, we list these advertisers:

Charles Mueller — dealer in wines, beer  
H. J. Rogers — blacksmith and woodwork man  
E. M. York — clothing  
John Bauer — merchant and autos  
Wm. W. Engel — real estate  
F. C. Doehring — auctioneer and real estate  
J. C. Pfeiffer — building materials and funeral director

Buell and Son — dealer in wine, liquor, and cigars  
H. H. Buesking — livery, feed, and sale barn  
J. E. Weber — general store  
Chris Kircher — general merchandise  
Wm. E. Swigert — wines, liquors, and cigars  
Charles C. Beck — store  
Strausburg State Bank

It is said that this mirror was purchased by the businessmen in town from a traveling salesman from Salem, Illinois. Henry Faster in the Strasburg State Bank signed up for the bank ad on the mirror. When the mirror was delivered, Faster saw that the name Strasburg was misspelled, and so that ad has never been paid for.



# Acknowledgements

The historical book committee gratefully acknowledges all the help given by so many in compiling this booklet. People made long distance phone calls, checked cemeteries for tombstone dates, tore entire pages out of albums, searched through scrapbooks, and went through abstracts, files and records.

Many contributed articles, notes, and histories. Among them were Nina Widdersheim, Roscoe and Mildred Hash, Lena Weber, Helen Rincker, Gene and Joyce Kull, Betty Stilabower, Linel and Ruth Thomas, G. B. Ulmer, Frank Laurent, Marvin Ulmer, Bryan Renshaw, Max Weber, Dwight and Melvina Lading, Dorothy Pfeiffer, Curtis and Genevieve Buesking, Wilma Decker, Ed Lenz, Rev. Kammrath, Max Prosser, Bessie Thomas, and Velma Weber. Local businessmen helped with their histories, and club officers contributed club records.

Personal histories and pictures came from the involved families shown in these photographs. Other pictures were loaned to us by Leland Buesking, Luella Kull, Ervin Reel, Dale Young, Forest Gene Risser, Ruth Bushhouse, Dorothy Pfeiffer, Florence Staehli, Martha Bauer, Charles Rosine, G. B. Ulmer, Aurora Kull, Mildred Hash, Max Weber, Grace Schmitt, Neva Buesking, Lena Weber, Maye Young, Alma Ruff, Nita Vogel, Bryan Renshaw, Gilbert Stremming, Oma Foelsing, Grace Knop, Emil Ulmer, Florence Spannagel, Waldo Wiandt, Lorene Baumgarten, and Ed Ostermeier. Roy Spracklen, Carroll Burgess, and Dale Young took photographs for the book.

We've relied on the memories of many, and we are grateful for all the time people have spent with us.

We're thankful to Nona Belle Keller who checked articles for grammatical errors; and to Annette Buesking, Joyce Kull, Carolyn Stremming, and Sharon Helton who typed the book copy.

A special thank-you goes to Donna Johnson and her group of ad salesmen for the book. On her committee were: Paula Kammrath, Kenton Augenstein, Martena Elam, Lynda Mason, Emily Young, Floyd Storm, and Ronnie Johnson.

The book committee appreciates all those who helped or encouraged in any way throughout the months of research and writing.

To the best of our ability, the information presented here is as accurate as possible. There may be discrepancies in some stories because memories are not infallable, and many times written records were not available.

It's been a joy to work with local citizens in gathering and recording the history of Strasburg.

*Florence Spannagel  
Noberta Renshaw  
Nita Vogel  
Chris Storm*

## Sources of Information

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5. "Strasburg Fiddles" by Beulah Gordon.

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|                               |                     |
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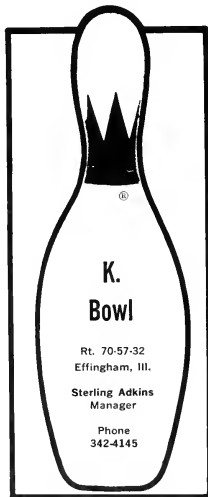
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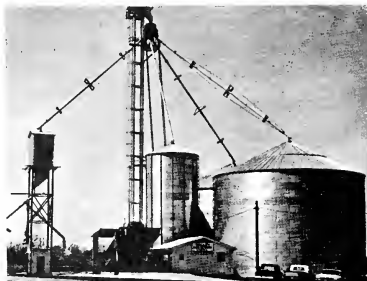


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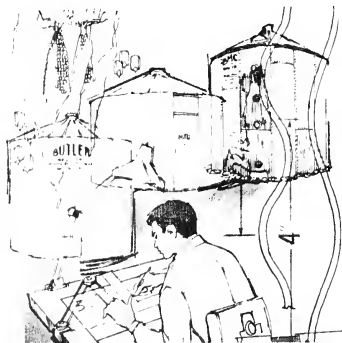
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